

LECTURES AND ESSAYS

AC
8
.I54
1st ser.

R. G. INGERSOLL

NUNC COGNOSCO EX PARTE

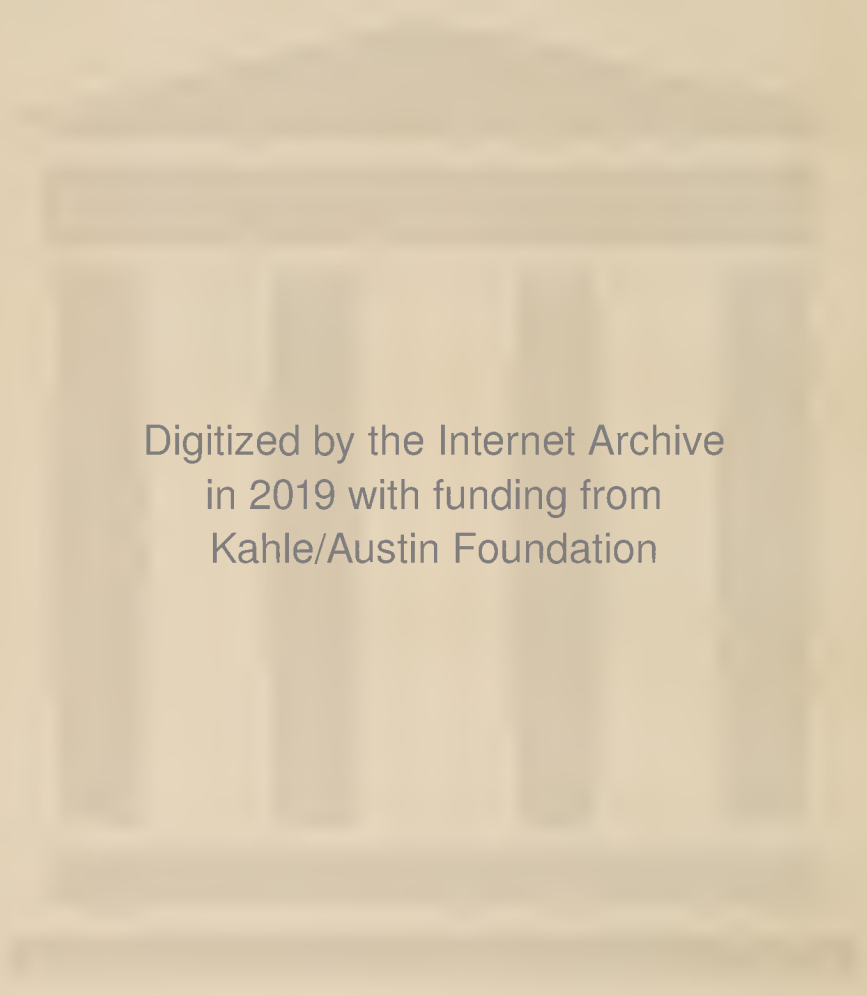


TRENT UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

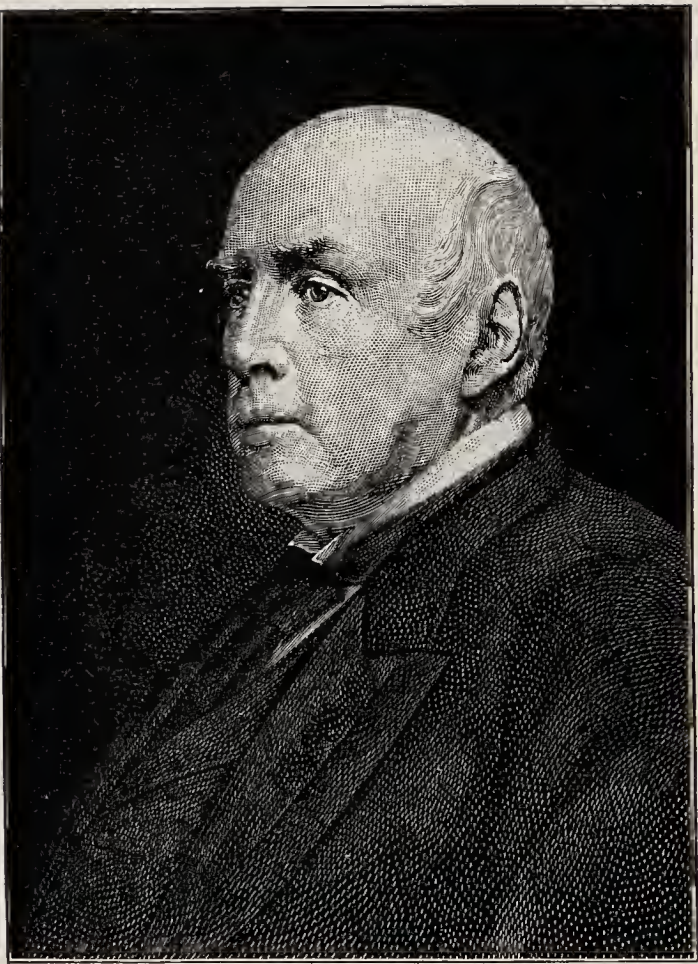
B. W. Holman.

Trent University Library

Jan. 1911



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation



LECTURES

AND ESSAYS

(A SELECTION)

BY

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

(First Series)

WATTS & CO.,
17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

1907

PREFACE

So many Freethinkers have been the sons of clergymen that there is probably a law of nature by which theology carries its retribution in its own bosom. That a revivalist preacher of the Presbyterian persuasion should have been the father of the most notorious "infidel" of modern times will appear strange only to those who forget the services which the clergy have rendered in providing recruits for Rationalism. Heredity sometimes plays surprising pranks, and we have not yet discovered why it is that the Christian baby is invariably as complete a little pagan as any other baby.

Robert Green Ingersoll was born at Dresden, in the State of New York, on August 11th, 1833. He married Eva Parker on February 13th, 1862, and died at Dobb's Ferry, in the same State, on July 21st, 1899. As a boy he led the breezy, open-air life which a child loves; and one may suspect, from an anecdote that he once threw a tart at a good old gentleman who had reproved him for noisiness, that Robert was rather a naughty youngster, and could not have sat as a model for Mark Twain's *Story of the Good Little Boy*. Perhaps he was fortunate in receiving but slight parental repression and no college education. He said, in later life, "Colleges - polish pebbles and dim diamonds"—but that was the opinion of the diamond.

Young Ingersoll began to study law at eighteen years of age, taught for a time in a school, became a clerk in a lawyer's office, and was admitted to the Illinois Bar when a little over twenty-one. Although the course of study was not at that time so

strict as it is now, and less severe than in Great Britain, Ingersoll worked very hard, sometimes until so late an hour that the dawn found him still at his studies. In 1857 he opened an office at Peoria, Illinois, in partnership with his brother, and retained his connection with the firm for nearly twenty years. In America there is no hard-and-fast line between the functions of barrister and solicitor—the same lawyer practises in both capacities; and Ingersoll's work was almost exclusively that for which he was so admirably fitted—advocacy. His extraordinary ability soon made itself manifest; clients became numerous, and large fees were willingly paid for his services. In less than ten years Ingersoll was appointed Attorney-General for the State of Illinois, and was recognised as one of the greatest lawyers in America. He never forgot what he read; he had a remarkable knowledge of human nature, and never-failing tact, penetration, and common sense. So strong was his influence with a jury, so keen his wit, so overpowering his eloquence, that the ablest advocates of the day felt a little uncomfortable when opposed to Robert Ingersoll. In 1868 he was defeated for the Governorship of the State by a man who had previously declared he would not stand, but who felt it his duty to oppose an "infidel." Greatly as he desired the post, Ingersoll made no attempt to secure it by concealing his convictions, and, scepticism not being the popular attitude, he paid the penalty which honest independence so frequently has to suffer.

Ingersoll's military career was a brief

one. Towards the end of 1861 he was appointed Colonel of the 11th Illinois Cavalry, and a few days after his marriage in the following February he took up the active command of his regiment, and left for the seat of war. On December 18th, 1862, his little force had the ill-fortune to be surrounded by a body of the enemy more than ten times as numerous, and, in spite of gallant efforts, Ingersoll had to surrender. Certain imputations afterwards made against his personal courage have been proved to be utterly without foundation.

Colonel Ingersoll's visits to Europe in 1875 and 1878 strengthened his delight in the works of Dickens, Burns, and, above all, Shakespeare, the fine lecture on whom is one of his best-known productions. He stood by the tomb of Napoleon, and thought of that meteoric man with wonder. But he would rather have been a French peasant, and worn wooden shoes, and lived in a hut with the vine growing over his door, with his wife by his side, and his children on his knees, than have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder known as Napoleon the Great. This is one of the touches that reveal the genuineness and beauty of Ingersoll's domestic life. His was an ideal home, full of tenderness, generosity, and sunshine. Four families lived under that hospitable roof, and his door was always open to a friend. Of his Quixotic generosity many instances are recorded.

Whatever one may think of Ingersoll's opinions, it must be admitted that as a man he was entitled to genuine admiration. He was the best of good fellows, a staunch friend, a courteous foe, an honest man. Courage, cheerfulness, and sympathy shone in the genial countenance, and merriment sparkled in his keen grey eye. His writings amply testify to his reverence for truth and justice, his passionate love of liberty, his earnest aspiration for a better social state. With many clergymen, particularly Henry Ward Beecher, he was the best of friends. That gentleman once wickedly remarked that he could write Ingersoll's epitaph by

simply using the title of one of his lectures—Robert Burns. Of the same preacher another incident is recorded in which he proved a match for the witty Agnostic. Mr. Beecher was showing a fine globe, and Ingersoll asked who made it. "Who made it?" said Beecher. "Oh, no one; it merely happened!"

As an orator Ingersoll undoubtedly held a very high rank. At any time, and in any weather, he could fill the biggest hall obtainable. His lectures yielded him an income about twice as large as that of the President of the United States, and it is believed that during the last twenty-five years of his life he derived from this source a greater amount than that earned during the same time by any twenty of the most famous lecturers in the country, including Henry Ward Beecher himself. But Ingersoll never cared to heap up riches, and when he died it was only a small estate that he left. He preferred to make others happy while he lived, and in many a grateful heart his memory is green. That we shall ever hear anything about the terrors of his death-bed seems impossible. Strange to say, this master-infidel felt no remorse, no terror, no anxiety about a future. In fact, he had no death-bed; he merely felt a little unwell, leaned back in his chair, and quietly breathed his last.

In estimating the value of Ingersoll's outspoken criticism, so much depends upon the personal equation that it is probably impossible to voice a verdict which shall satisfy all readers. Some of his admirers place him on a pinnacle of almost unapproachable greatness. His biographer, Mr. Edward Garstin Smith, indeed, brackets him with Shakespeare, as one of the two greatest minds of the world. This is painfully injudicious. The Christian party, on the other hand, usually look upon Ingersoll as merely a vulgar infidel, who caricatured all that is holiest in their faith, and wasted his talents in attacking aspects of religion which have long since been given up. A just estimate must be sought somewhere between these two extremes—

precisely where each reader must judge for himself. Anyone who will honestly seek to deal impartially with a somewhat unmanageable opponent will come to see that a large proportion of Ingersoll's onslaught is adequate and reasonable. That it was occasionally too strongly expressed was due to a righteous indignation at what he deemed to be wilful and mischievous error. It is beyond question that in its severer forms theology has an extremely noxious influence—an influence from which, so great is the vitality of error, it is a hard task for humanity to deliver itself. Ingersoll's work has a positive aspect of undeniable value. In his belief that human activity is limited to the present life he was a Secularist. In his rejection of the problematical he was an Agnostic. Beyond the known he declined to go. One life at a time was enough for him. If there should prove to be a future state, no man, he held, would be punished for being unable to believe in it. The ideas of God and immortality are speculative conceptions, on which negative opinions are not merely defensible, but legitimate. Ingersoll believed in being true to himself, and in recognising the eternal limitations of human thought. His vehement criticism of the Bible was prompted by the conviction that the Bible has been a serious stumbling-block to the progress of civilisation; and if he was at times too uncompromising, it must be said that the extravagances of the popular theology furnished him with ample excuse. His constructive work consisted in emphasising the claims of the secular life, with its basis of certain knowledge, as against the claims of the religious life, with its basis of dubiety. The school-house was his cathedral, and the universe his Bible. He believed that happiness is the only good, reason man's only light, justice the only worship, humanity the only religion, and love the only priest. He believed in moral causation, in liberty, labour, intelligence, education, good health and good fellowship all round. Such a gospel may omit some of the finest elements of a well-rounded life,

but a man who believes in this gospel as fervently as Ingersoll did cannot go far wrong in forcibly proclaiming it.

Ingersoll was reproached with hammering away too persistently at the falsities and barbarisms of the Old Testament. Here he found a splendid opportunity, and he made relentless use of it. The believer naturally objects to the salt being so unmercifully rubbed into the sore place, but it is questionable whether a milder treatment would have served the purpose Ingersoll desired to attain. Nor would he have taken so decided a line if the falsities and barbarities in question had not been alleged to form an essential part of a divine revelation. Had the Bible always been recognised as what it is—a collection of purely human writings—Ingersoll would have let it alone. Extravagant claims provoke bitter rejections. Excessive emphasis mars a good deal of his work; but while "overdoing it" is always inartistic, it is frequently efficacious. The proof of Ingersoll's success is the impression he made on the orthodox world. Mr. Smith assures us that he revolutionised theology in America; and it is certain that, as a result of these and similar attacks, doctrines which were once held firmly are now held doubtfully, or altogether abandoned. Within my own recollection leaders of Christian thought have defended such atrocities as the massacres of the Canaanites simply and solely because a book believed to be divinely inspired attributed them to the direct command of God. Against this warping of the moral sense by doubtful authority no protest could be too strong. And when we remember that this idea of inspiration assumed to guarantee wrong was never a certainty, but always, in reality, gravely doubtful, we perceive that a rough-and-ready scepticism may get nearer the truth than learned piety. Only a few years ago so eminent a man as Mr. Gladstone could in all good faith set himself to defend the accuracy of Genesis. Yet now the *Encyclopædia Biblica* denies the accuracy not only of Genesis, but of every other book in the Bible as well.

John Wesley said that to give up witchcraft was to give up the Bible. If he was right, modern Christianity has done both. But it is hardly logical to abandon the theory of inspiration and still seek to retain the special doctrines which nothing short of inspiration could recommend. The true value of that wonderful expression of the religious sentiment is not diminished by recognising that it is flawed by a multitude of imperfections. And we do not get rid of the imperfections by charging them to Deity, or by stifling the reason and denying their existence. Modern Christianity is reluctantly, but steadily, tending to the conception of the Bible's human origin; and Ingersoll, more than any other one man, is responsible for the improvement.

A further reason for many crudities in his lectures may be found in the fact that his appeal was not to the scholar, but to "the man in the street." There are still a few millions who hold on like grim death to conceptions which the student has outgrown; but the light will reach them in time, and the door-slamming criticism of men like Ingersoll impresses many who cannot appreciate the cautious "hedging" of progressive theology. It is, I venture to think, to Ingersoll's everlasting credit that against the monstrous doctrine of hell he expended the most tempestuous eloquence at his command. Textual criticism on that subject he disdained, but he played like a master on the strings of our natural human instincts.

Ingersoll's exaggerations are not usually very serious. He deals lavishly in "millions" when perhaps a smaller term would suffice, and occasionally throws in a billion or two to emphasise the point. According to him, hundreds of millions have been destroyed for thinking God good; the Biblical ideas of God are more cruel and brutal than those of the most degraded savage; Brahma, Osiris, Zeus, and Jupiter were a thousand times nobler than Jehovah; hundreds of passages in the Bible authorise slavery; hundreds of offences were punished with death; the Church fought facts with the ferocity of a

fiend; and so forth. But that was only his playful way of putting it, and we must make allowances. A few mistakes do not matter; Ingersoll never claimed to be inspired. He was really a truthful man, but he had a good deal of provocation. The judicious reader will discount such rhetorical excursions for himself, while not failing to do justice to the sincere moral feeling that underlies them. Ingersoll was tremendously in earnest, and that was the secret of his power. Courage, humour, self-reliance, and individuality appear in almost every page of his writings. In its way, his style is almost perfect—strong, idiomatic, unmistakeably clear; as a rule keenly logical, and, in spite of frequent repetitions and occasional artificiality, rising in numberless passages into genuine eloquence and sunny heights of poetry. That he was a controversialist of formidable skill is shown by the discussion which arose in 1881 upon his article in the *North American Review*. Judge Black, Dr. Henry Field, Mr. Gladstone, and Cardinal Manning entered the lists against him, and were one and all promptly unhorsed. In this controversy may be found some of Ingersoll's ablest work, though here, also, he was perhaps a little too prone to make capital out of Old Testament absurdities. For this let him not be unduly blamed. After all, the Bible *has* a bad side, and it was the orthodox error in the opposite direction that made Ingersoll in the eyes of many appear to be actuated by virulent bias when he was sincerely following the light he possessed. Anyone who realises what orthodox Christianity has been must feel thankful for the work of Robert Ingersoll.

A few passages in the present selection of lectures and essays have been omitted, as lacking interest for the British reader, or as being unduly fervent in expression; but with these exceptions the lectures and essays are given as they appear in the Dresden edition of Ingersoll's works, and may be taken as fairly representing his mature thought on the subjects discussed.

CHARLES T. GORHAM.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE TRUTH	9
THE GODS	21
ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE -	46
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?	67
THE LIBERTY OF MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD	89
A THANKSGIVING SERMON	110
THE GHOSTS -	126
HOW TO REFORM MANKIND	145
ART AND MORALITY	156

LECTURES AND ESSAYS

THE TRUTH

I.

THROUGH millions of ages, by countless efforts to satisfy his wants, to gratify his passions, his appetites, man slowly developed his brain, changed two of his feet into hands, and forced into the darkness of his brain a few gleams and glimmerings of reason. He was hindered by ignorance, by fear, by mistakes, and he advanced only as he found the truth—the absolute facts. Through countless years he has groped and crawled and struggled and climbed and stumbled towards the light. He has been hindered and delayed and deceived by augurs and prophets—by popes and priests. He has been betrayed by saints, misled by apostles and Christs, frightened by devils and ghosts—enslaved by chiefs and kings—robbed by altars and thrones. In the name of education his mind has been filled with mistakes, with miracles, and lies, with the impossible, the absurd and infamous. In the name of religion he has been taught humility and arrogance, love and hatred, forgiveness and revenge.

But the world is changing. We are tired of barbarian bibles and savage creeds.

Nothing is greater, nothing is of more importance, than to find amid the errors and darkness of this life a shining truth.

Truth is the intellectual wealth of the world.

The noblest of occupations is to search for truth.

Truth is the foundation, the superstructure, and the glittering dome of progress.

Truth is the mother of joy. Truth civilises, ennobles, and purifies. The grandest ambition that can enter the soul is to know the truth.

Truth gives man the greatest power for good. Truth is sword and shield. It is the sacred light of the soul.

The man who finds a truth lights a torch.

Truth is to be found by investigation, experiment, and reason.

Every human being should be allowed to investigate to the extent of his desire—his ability. The literature of the world should be open to him—nothing prohibited, sealed, or hidden. No subject can be too sacred to be understood. Each person should be allowed to reach his own conclusions and to speak his honest thought.

He who threatens the investigator with punishment here, or hereafter, is an enemy of the human race. And he who tries to bribe the investigator with the promise of eternal joy is a traitor to his fellow-men.

There is no real investigation without freedom—freedom from the fear of gods and men.

So, all investigation—all experiment—should be pursued in the light of reason.

Every man should be true to himself—true to the inward light. Each man in the laboratory of his own mind, and

for himself alone, should test the so-called facts—the theories of all the world. Truth, *in accordance with his reason*, should be his guide and master.

To love the truth, thus perceived, is mental virtue—intellectual purity. This is true manhood. This is freedom.

To throw away your reason at the command of churches, popes, parties, kings, or gods, is to be a serf, a slave.

It is not simply the right, but it is the duty, of every man to think—to investigate for himself; and every man who tries to prevent this by force or fear is doing all he can to degrade and enslave his fellow-men.

He should preserve as his most precious jewel the perfect veracity of his soul.

He should examine all questions presented to his mind, without prejudice—unbiassed by hatred or love—by desire or fear. His object, and his only object, should be to find the truth. He knows, if he listens to reason, that truth is not dangerous, and that error is. He should weigh the evidence, the arguments, in honest scales—scales that passion or interest cannot change. He should care nothing for authority—nothing for names, customs, or creeds—nothing for anything that his reason does not say is true.

Of his world he should be the sovereign, and his soul should wear the purple. From his dominions should be banished the hosts of force and fear.

Prejudice, egotism, hatred, contempt, disdain, are the enemies of truth and progress.

The real searcher after truth will not receive the old because it is old, or reject the new because it is new. He will not believe men because they are dead, or contradict them because they are alive. With him an utterance is worth the truth, the reason it contains, without the slightest regard to the author. He may have been a king or serf—a philosopher or servant—but the utterance neither gains nor loses in truth or reason. Its value is absolutely independent of the fame or station of the man who gave it to the world.

Nothing but falsehood needs the assistance of fame and place, of robes and mitres, of tiaras and crowns.

The wise, the really honest and intelligent, are not swayed or governed by numbers—by majorities.

They accept what they really believe to be true. They care nothing for the opinion of ancestors, nothing for creeds, assertions, and theories, unless they satisfy the reason.

In all directions they seek for truth, and when found accept it with joy—accept it in spite of preconceived opinions—in spite of prejudice and hatred.

This is the course pursued by wise and honest men, and no other course is possible for them.

In every department of human endeavour men are seeking for the truth—for the facts. The statesman reads the history of the world, gathers the statistics of all nations, to the end that his country may avoid the mistakes of the past. The geologist penetrates the rocks in search of facts—climbs mountains, visits the extinct craters, traverses islands and continents, that he may know something of the history of the world. He wants the truth.

The chemist, with crucible and retort, with countless experiments, is trying to find the qualities of substances—to unravel what nature has woven.

The great mechanics dwell in the realm of the real. They seek by natural means to conquer and use the forces of nature. They want the truth—the actual facts.

The physicians, the surgeons, rely on observation, experiment, and reason. They become acquainted with the human body—with muscle, blood, and nerve—with the wonders of the brain. They want nothing but the truth.

And so it is with the students of every science. On every hand they look for facts, and it is of the utmost importance that they give to the world the facts they find.

Their courage should equal their intelligence. No matter what the dead

have said, or the living believe, they should tell what they know. They should have intellectual courage.

If it be good for man to find the truth—good for him to be intellectually honest and hospitable, then it is good for others to know the truths thus found.

Every man should have the courage to give his honest thought. This makes the finder and publisher of truth a public benefactor.

Those who prevent or try to prevent the expression of honest thought are the foes of civilisation—the enemies of truth. Nothing can exceed the egotism and impudence of the man who claims the right to express his thought and denies the same right to others.

It will not do to say that certain ideas are sacred, and that man has not the right to investigate and test these ideas for himself.

Who knows that they are sacred? Can anything be sacred to us that we do not know to be true?

For many centuries free speech has been an insult to God. Nothing has been more blasphemous than the expression of honest thought. For many ages the lips of the wise were sealed. The torches that truth had lighted, that courage carried and held aloft, were extinguished with blood.

Truth has always been in favour of free speech—has always asked to be investigated—has always longed to be known and understood. Freedom, discussion, honesty, investigation, and courage are the friends and allies of truth. Truth loves the light and the open field. It appeals to the senses—to the judgment, the reason, to all the higher and nobler faculties and powers of the mind. It seeks to calm the passions, to destroy prejudice, and to increase the volume and intensity of reason's flame.

It does not ask man to cringe or crawl. It does not desire the worship of the ignorant, or the prayers and praises of the frightened. It says to every human being: "Think for yourself. Enjoy the freedom of a god, and have the goodness and the

courage to express your honest thought."

Why should we pursue the truth? and why should we investigate and reason? and why should we be mentally honest and hospitable? and why should we express our honest thoughts? To this there is but one answer: for the benefit of mankind.

The brain must be developed. The world must think. Speech must be free. The world must learn that credulity is not a virtue, and that no question is settled until reason is fully satisfied.

By these means man will overcome many of the obstructions of nature. He will cure or avoid many diseases. He will lessen pain. He will lengthen, enoble, and enrich life. In every direction he will increase his power. He will satisfy his wants, gratify his tastes. He will put roof and raiment, food and fuel, home and happiness, within the reach of all.

He will drive want and crime from the world. He will destroy the serpents of fear, the monsters of superstition. He will become intelligent and free, honest and serene.

The monarch of the skies will be dethroned—the flames of hell will be extinguished. Pious beggars will become honest and useful men. Hypocrisy will collect no tolls from fear, lies will not be regarded as sacred, this life will not be sacrificed for another, human beings will love each other instead of gods, men will do right not for the sake of reward in some other world, but for the sake of happiness here. Man will find that Nature is the only revelation, and that he, by his own efforts, must learn to read the stories told by star and cloud, by rock and soil, by sea and stream, by rain and fire, by plant and flower, by life in all its curious forms, and all the things and forces of the world.

When he reads these stories, these records, he will know that man must rely on himself—that the supernatural does not exist, and that man must be the providence of man.

It is impossible to conceive of an

argument against the freedom of thought—against maintaining your self-respect and preserving the spotless and stainless veracity of the soul.

II.

All that I have said seems to be true, almost self-evident; and you may ask who it is that says slavery is better than liberty. Let me tell you.

All the popes and priests, all the orthodox churches and clergymen, say that they have a revelation from God.

The Protestants say that it is the duty of every person to read, to understand, and to believe this revelation—that a man should use his reason; but if he honestly concludes that the Bible is not a revelation from God, and dies with that conclusion in his mind, he will be tormented for ever. They say "Read," and then add: "Believe, or be damned."

"No matter how unreasonable the Bible may appear to you, you must believe. No matter how impossible the miracles may seem, you must believe. No matter how cruel the laws, your heart must approve them all!"

This is what the Church calls the liberty of thought.

We read the Bible under the scowl and threat of God. We read by the glare of hell. On one side is the devil with the instruments of torture in his hands. On the other God, ready to launch the infinite curse. And the Church says to the readers: "You are free to decide. God is good, and he gives you the liberty to choose."

The Popes and the Priests say to the poor people: "You need not read the Bible. You cannot understand it. That is the reason it is called a revelation. We will read it for you, and you must believe what we say. We carry the key of hell. Contradict us, and you will become eternal convicts in the prison of God."

This is the freedom of the Catholic Church.

And all these priests and clergymen insist that the Bible is superior to human

reason—that it is the duty of man to accept it—to believe it, whether he really thinks it is true or not, and without the slightest regard to evidence or reason.

It is his duty to cast out from the temple of his soul the goddess Reason, and bow before the coiled serpent of Fear.

This is what the Church calls virtue.

Under these conditions what can thought be worth? The brain, swept by the sirocco of God's curse, becomes a desert.

But this is not all. To compel man to desert the standard of Reason, the Church does not entirely rely on the threat of eternal pain to be endured in another world, but holds out the reward of everlasting joy.

To those who believe it promises the endless ecstasies of heaven. If it cannot frighten, it will bribe. It relies on fear and hope.

A religion, to command the respect of intelligent men, should rest on a foundation of established facts. It should appeal, not to passion, not to hope and fear, but to the judgment. It should ask that all the faculties of the mind, all the senses, should assemble and take counsel together, and that its claims be examined and tested without prejudice, without fear, in the calm of perfect candour.

But the Church cries: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Without this belief there is no salvation. Salvation is the reward for belief.

Belief is, and for ever must be, the result of evidence. A promised reward is not evidence. It sheds no intellectual light. It establishes no fact, answers no objection, and dissipates no doubt.

Is it honest to offer a reward for belief?

The man who gives money to a judge or juror for a decision or verdict is guilty of a crime. Why? Because he induces the judge, the juror, to decide, not according to the law, to the facts, the right, but according to the bribe.

The bribe is not evidence.

So, the promise of Christ to reward those who will believe is a bribe. It is an attempt to make a promise take the place of evidence. He who says that he believes, and does this for the sake of the reward, corrupts his soul.

Suppose I should say that at the centre of the earth there is a diamond one hundred miles in diameter, and that I would give ten thousand dollars to any man who would believe my statement. Could such a promise be regarded as evidence?

Intelligent people would ask not for rewards, but reasons. Only hypocrites would ask for the money.

* Yet, according to the New Testament, Christ offered a reward to those who would believe, and this promised reward was to take the place of evidence. When Christ made this promise he forgot, ignored, or held in contempt, the rectitude of a brave, free, and natural soul.

The declaration that salvation is the reward for belief is inconsistent with mental freedom, and could have been made by no man who thought that evidence sustained the slightest relation to belief.

Every sermon in which men have been told that they could save their souls by believing has been an injury. Such sermons dull the moral sense and subvert the true conception of virtue and duty.

The true man, when asked to believe, asks for evidence. The true man, who asks another to believe, offers evidence.

But this is not all.

In spite of the threat of eternal pain—of the promise of everlasting joy—unbelievers increased, and the Churches took another step.

The Churches said to the unbelievers, the heretics: "Although our God will punish you for ever in another world—in his prison—the doors of which open only to receive, we, unless you believe, will torment you now."

And then the members of these Churches, led by popes, priests, and clergymen, sought out their unbelieving

neighbours—chained them in dungeons, stretched them on racks, crushed their bones, cut out their tongues, extinguished their eyes, flayed them alive, and consumed their poor bodies in flames.

All this was done because these Christian savages believed in the dogma of eternal pain—because they believed that heaven was the reward for belief. So believing, they were the enemies of free-thought and speech—they cared nothing for conscience, nothing for the veracity of a soul, nothing for the manhood of a man. In all ages most priests have been heartless and relentless. They have calumniated and tortured. In defeat they have crawled and whined. In victory they have killed. The flower of pity never blossomed in their hearts and in their brain. Justice never held aloft the scales. Now they are not as cruel. They have lost their power, but they are still trying to accomplish the impossible. They fill their pockets with "fool's gold," and think they are rich. They stuff their minds with mistakes, and think they are wise. They console themselves with legends and myths, have faith in fiction and forgery—give their hearts to ghosts and phantoms, and seek the aid of the non-existent.

They put a monster—a master—a tyrant in the sky, and seek to enslave their fellow men. They teach the cringing virtues of serfs. They abhor the courage of manly men. They hate the man who thinks. They long for revenge.

They warm their hands at the imaginary fires of hell.

I show them that hell does not exist, and they denounce me for destroying their consolation.

Horace Greeley, as the story goes, one cold day went into a country store, took a seat by the stove, unbuttoned his coat, and spread out his hands.

In a few minutes a little boy who clerked in the store said: "Mr. Greeley, there ain't no fire in that stove."

"You d—d little rascal," said Greeley; "what did you tell me for? I was getting real warm."

III.

All the sciences—except Theology—are eager for facts—hungry for the truth. On the brow of a finder of a fact the laurel is placed.

In a theological seminary, if a professor finds a fact inconsistent with the creed, he must keep it secret or deny it, or lose his place. Mental veracity is a crime; cowardice and hypocrisy are virtues.

A fact inconsistent with the creed is denounced as a lie, and the man who declares or announces the fact is a blasphemer. Every professor breathes the air of insincerity. Theology is the only dishonest science—the only one that is based on belief—on credulity—the only one that abhors investigation, that despises thought and denounces reason.

All the great theologians in the Catholic Church have denounced reason as the light furnished by the enemy of mankind—as the road that leads to perdition. All the great Protestant theologians, from Luther to the orthodox clergy of our time, have been the enemies of reason. All orthodox Churches of all ages have been the enemies of science. They attacked the astronomers as though they were criminals—the geologists as though they were assassins. They regarded physicians as the enemies of God—as men who were trying to defeat the decrees of Providence. The biologists, the anthropologists, the archæologists, the readers of ancient inscriptions, the delvers in buried cities, were all hated by the theologians. They were afraid that these men might find something inconsistent with the Bible.

The theologians attacked those who studied other religions. They insisted that Christianity was not a growth—not an evolution—but a revelation. They denied that it was in any way connected with any natural religion.

The facts now show beyond all doubt that all religions came from substantially the same source; but there is not an orthodox Christian theologian who will

admit the facts. He must defend his creed—his revelation. He cannot afford to be honest. He was not educated in an honest school. He was not taught to be honest. He was taught to believe and to defend his belief, not only against argument, but against facts.

There is not a theologian in the whole world who can produce the slightest, the least particle of evidence tending to show that the Bible is the inspired word of God.

Where is the evidence that the book of Ruth was written by an inspired man? Where is the evidence that God is the author of the Song of Solomon? Where is the evidence that any human being has been inspired? Where is the evidence that Christ was and is God? Where is the evidence that the places called heaven and hell exist? Where is the evidence that a miracle was ever wrought? There is none.

Where is the evidence that angels and ghosts—that devils and gods exist? Have these beings been seen or touched? Does one of our senses certify to their existence?

The theologians depend on assertions. They have no evidence. They claim that their inspired book is superior to reason and independent of evidence.

They talk about probability—analogy—inferences—but they present no evidence. They say that they know that Christ lived, in the same way that they know that Cæsar lived. They might add that they know Moses talked with Jehovah on Sinai the same way they know that Brigham Young talked with God in Utah. The evidence in both cases is the same—none in either.

How do they prove that Christ rose from the dead? They find the account in a book. Who wrote the book? They do not know. What evidence is this? None, unless all things found in books are true.

It is impossible to establish one miracle except by another—and that would have to be established by another still, and so on without end. Human testimony is

not sufficient to establish a miracle. Each human being, to be really convinced, must witness the miracle for himself.

They say that Christianity was established, proven to be true, by miracles wrought nearly two thousand years ago. Not one of these miracles can be established except by impudent and ignorant assertion—except by poisoning and deforming the minds of the ignorant and the young. To succeed, the theologians invade the cradle, the nursery. In the brain of innocence they plant the seeds of superstition. They pollute the minds and imaginations of children. They frighten the happy with threats of pain—they soothe the wretched with gilded lies.

The student of this science of theology must be taught in youth—in his mother's arms. These lies must be sown and planted in his brain the first of all. He must be taught to believe, to accept without question. He must be told that it is wicked to doubt, that it is sinful to inquire—that faith is a virtue and unbelief a crime.

In this way his mind is poisoned, paralysed. On all other subjects he has liberty—and in all other directions he is urged to study and think. From his mother's arms he goes to the Sunday school. His poor little mind is filled with miracles and wonders. He is told about a God who made the world, and who rewards and punishes. He is told that this God is the author of the Bible—that Christ is his son. He is told about original sin and the atonement, and he believes what he hears. No reasons are given—no facts—no evidence is presented—nothing but assertion. If he asks questions, he is silenced by more solemn assertions, and warned against the devices of the evil one. Every Sunday school is a kind of inquisition where they torture and deform the minds of children—where they force their souls into Catholic or Protestant moulds—and do all they can to destroy the originality, the individuality, and the veracity

of the soul. In the theological seminary the destruction is complete.

When the minister leaves the seminary he is not seeking the truth. He has it. He has a revelation from God, and he has a creed in exact accordance with that revelation. His business is to stand by that revelation and to defend that creed. Arguments against the revelation and the creed he will not read, he will not hear. All facts that are against his religion he will deny. It is impossible for him to be candid. The tremendous "verities" of eternal joy, of everlasting pain, are in his creed, and they result from believing the false and denying the true.

Investigation is an infinite danger; unbelief is an infinite offence, and deserves and will receive infinite punishment. In the shadow of this tremendous "fact" his courage dies, his manhood is lost, and in his fear he cries out that he believes, whether he does or not.

He says and teaches that credulity is safe and thought dangerous. Yet he pretends to be a teacher—a leader, one selected by God to educate his fellow-men.

These orthodox ministers have been the slanderers of the really great men of our century. They denounced Lyell, the great geologist, for giving facts to the world. They hated and belittled Humboldt, one of the greatest and most intellectual of the race. They ridiculed and derided Darwin, the greatest naturalist, the keenest observer, the best judge of the value of a fact, the most wonderful discoverer of truth that the world has produced.

In every orthodox pulpit stood a traducer of the greatest of scientists—of one who filled the world with intellectual light.

The Church has been the enemy of every science, of every real thinker, and for many centuries has used her power to prevent intellectual progress.

Ministers ought to be free. They should be the heralds of the ever-coming day; but they are the bats, the owls that

inhabit ruins, that hate the light. They denounce honest men who express their thoughts as blasphemers, and do what they can to close their mouths. For their Bible they ask the protection of law. They wish to be shielded from laughter by the legislature. They ask that the arguments of their opponents be answered by the courts. This is the result of a due admixture of cowardice, hypocrisy, and malice.

What valuable fact has been proclaimed from an orthodox pulpit? What ecclesiastical council has added to the intellectual wealth of the world?

Many centuries ago the Church gave to Christendom a code of laws, stupid, unphilosophic, and brutal to the last degree.

The Church insists that it has made man merciful and just. Did it do this by torturing heretics—by extinguishing their eyes—by flaying them alive? Did it accomplish this result through the Inquisition—by the use of the thumb-screw, the rack, and the fagot? Of what science has the Church been the friend and champion? What orthodox Church has opened its doors to a persecuted truth?

They tell us that the Church has been and is the friend of education. I deny it. The Church founded colleges, not to educate men, but to make proselytes, converts, defenders. This was in accordance with the instinct of self-preservation. No orthodox Church ever was, or ever will be, in favour of real education. A Catholic is in favour of enough education to make a Catholic out of a savage, and the Protestant is in favour of enough education to make a Protestant out of a Catholic; but both are opposed to the education that makes free and manly men.

So, they tell us that the Church has built hospitals. This is not true. Men have not built hospitals because they were Christians, but because they were men. They have not built them for charity, but in self-defence.

If a man comes to your door with the

small-pox, you cannot let him in, you cannot kill him. As a necessity, you provide a place for him. And you do this to protect yourself. With this Christianity has had nothing to do.

The Church cannot give, because it does not produce. It is claimed that the Church has made men and women forgiving. I admit that the Church has preached forgiveness, but it has never forgiven an enemy—never. Against the great and brave thinkers it has coined and circulated countless lies. Never has the Church told, or tried to tell, the truth about an honest foe.

The Church teaches the existence of the supernatural. It believes in the divine sleight-of-hand—in the “presto” and “open sesame” of the Infinite; in some invisible Being who produces effects without causes and causes without effects; whose caprice governs the world, and who can be persuaded by prayer, softened by ceremony, and who will, as a reward for faith, save men from the natural consequences of their actions.

The Church denies the eternal, inexorable sequence of events.

What good has the Church accomplished? It claims to have preached peace because its founder said, “I came not to bring peace, but a sword.”

It claims to have preserved the family because its founder offered a hundred-fold here and life everlasting to those who would desert wife and children.

So, it claims to have taught the brotherhood of man, and that the gospel is for all the world, because Christ said to the woman of Samaria that he came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and declared that it was not meet to take the bread of the children and cast it unto dogs.

In the name of Christ who threatened eternal revenge, it has preached forgiveness.

Most of the priests pretend to believe in moral suasion, and want everything regulated by law. If they had the power, they would prohibit everything that men and women really enjoy. They

want libraries, museums, and art galleries closed on the Sabbath. They would abolish the Sunday paper, stop the running of cars and all public conveyances on the holy day, and compel all the people to enjoy sermons, prayers, and psalms.

These dear ministers, when they have poor congregations, thunder against trusts, syndicates, and corporations—against wealth, fashion, and luxury. They tell about Dives and Lazarus, paint rich men in hell and beggars in heaven. If their congregations are rich, they turn their guns in the other direction.

They have no confidence in education—in the development of the brain. They appeal to hopes and fears. They ask no one to think—to investigate. They insist that all shall believe. Credulity is the greatest of virtues, and doubt the deadliest of sins.

These men are the enemies of science—of intellectual progress. They ridicule and calumniate the great thinkers. They deny everything that conflicts with the “sacred scriptures.” They still believe in the astronomy of Joshua and the geology of Moses. They believe in the miracles of the past, and deny the demonstrations of the present. They are the foes of facts—the enemies of knowledge. A desire to be happy here they regard as wicked and worldly, but a desire to be happy in another world as virtuous and spiritual.

Every orthodox Church is founded on mistake and falsehood. Every good orthodox minister asserts what he does not know, and denies what he does know.

On every hand the clergy sow the seeds of superstition. They paralyse the minds and pollute the imaginations of children. They fill their hearts with fear. By their teachings thousands become insane. With them hypocrisy is respectable and candour infamous. They enslave the minds of men. Under their teachings men waste and misdirect their energies, abandon the ends that

can be accomplished, dedicate their lives to the impossible, worship the unknown, pray to the inconceivable, and become the trembling slaves of a monstrous myth born of ignorance and fashioned by the trembling hands of fear.

Superstition is the serpent that crawls and hisses in every Eden, and fastens its poisonous fangs in the hearts of men.

It is the deadliest foe of the human race.

Superstition is a beggar—a robber, a tyrant.

Science is a benefactor.

Superstition sheds blood.

Science sheds light.

The dear preachers must give up the account of creation—the Garden of Eden, the mud-man, the rib-woman, and the walking, talking snake. They must throw away the apple, the fall of man, the expulsion, and the gate guarded by angels armed with swords. They must give up the flood and the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues. They must give up Abraham, and the wrestling match between Jacob and the Lord. So, the story of Joseph, the enslavement of the Hebrews by the Egyptians, the story of Moses in the bull-rushes, the burning bush, the turning of sticks into serpents, of water into blood, the miraculous creation of frogs, the killing of cattle with hail and changing dust into lice—all must be given up. The sojourn of forty years in the desert, the opening of the Red Sea, the clothes and shoes that refused to wear out, the manna, the quails and the serpents, the water that ran up hill, the talking of Jehovah with Moses face to face, the giving of the Ten Commandments, the opening of the earth to swallow the enemies of Moses—all must be thrown away.

These good preachers must admit that blowing horns could not throw down the walls of a city, that it was horrible for Jephthah to sacrifice his daughter, that the day was not lengthened and the moon stopped for the sake of Joshua, that the dead Samuel was not raised by

a witch, that a man was not carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, that the river Jordan was not divided by the stroke of a cloak, that the bears did not destroy children for laughing at a prophet, that a wandering soothsayer did not collect lightnings from heaven to destroy the lives of innocent men, that he did not cause rain and make iron float, that ravens did not keep a hotel where preachers got board and lodging free, that the shadow on a dial was not turned back ten degrees to show that a king was going to recover from a boil, that Ezekiel was not told by God how to prepare a dinner, that Jonah did not take cabin passage in a fish, and that all the miracles in the Old Testament are not allegories, or poems, but just old-fashioned lies. And the dear preachers will be compelled to admit that there never was a miraculous babe without a natural father—that Christ, if he lived, was a man, and nothing more—that he did not cast devils out of folks—that he did not cure blindness with spittle and clay, nor turn water into wine, nor make fishes and loaves of bread out of nothing—that he did not know where to catch fishes with money in their mouths—that he did not take a walk on the water—that he did not at will become invisible—that he did not pass through closed doors—that he did not raise the dead—that angels never rolled stones from a sepulchre—that Christ did not rise from the dead, and did not ascend to heaven.

All these mistakes and illusions and delusions—all these miracles and myths—must fade from the minds of intelligent men.

My dear preachers, I beg you to tell the truth. Tell your congregations that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch. Tell them that nobody knows who wrote the five books. Tell them that Deuteronomy was not written until about six hundred years before Christ. Tell them that nobody knows who wrote Joshua, or Judges, or Ruth, Samuel, Kings or Chronicles, Job or the Psalms, or the Song of Solomon. Be honest,

tell the truth. Tell them that nobody knows who wrote Esther—that Ecclesiastes was written long after Solomon—that many of the prophecies were written after the events pretended to be foretold had happened. Tell them that Ezekiel and Daniel were insane. Tell them that nobody knows who wrote the gospels, and tell them that no line about Christ written by a contemporary has been found. Tell them it is all guess—and may be, and perhaps. Be honest. Tell the truth, develop your brains, use all your senses, and hold high the torch of Reason.

In a few years the pulpits will be filled with teachers instead of preachers—with thoughtful, brave, and honest men. The congregations will be civilised—intellectually honest and hospitable.

Now, most of the ministers insist that the old falsehoods shall be treated with reverence; that ancient lies with long white beards—wrinkled and bald-headed frauds—round-shouldered and toothless miracles, and palsied mistakes on crutches, shall be called allegories, parables, oriental imagery, inspired poems. In their presence the ungodly should remove their hats. They should respect the mould and moss of antiquity. They should remember that these lies, these frauds, the miracles and mistakes, have for thousands of years ruled, enslaved, and corrupted the human race.

These ministers ought to know that their creeds are based on imagined facts and demonstrated by assertion.

They ought to know that they have no evidence—nothing but promises and threats. They ought to know that it is impossible to conceive of force existing without and before matter—that it is equally impossible to conceive of matter without force—that it is impossible to conceive of the creation or destruction of matter or force—that it is impossible to conceive of infinite intelligence dwelling from eternity in infinite space, and that it is impossible to conceive of the creator, or creation, of substance.

The God of the Christian is an enthroned guess—a perhaps—an inference.

No man, and no body of men, can answer the questions of the Whence and Whither. The mystery of existence cannot be explained by the intellect of man.

Back of life, of existence, we cannot go—beyond death we cannot see. All duties, all obligations, all knowledge, all experience, are for this life, for this world.

We know that men and women and children exist. We know that happiness, for the most part, depends on conduct.

We are satisfied that all the gods are phantoms, and that the supernatural does not exist.

We know the difference between hope and knowledge: we hope for happiness here and we dream of joy hereafter, but we do not know. We cannot assert, we can only hope. We can have our dream. In the wide night our star can shine and shed its radiance on the graves of those we love. We can bend above our pallid dead and say that beyond this life there are no sighs—no tears—no breaking hearts.

CONCLUSION.

Let us be honest. Let us preserve the veracity of our souls. Let education commence in the cradle—in the lap of the loving mother. This is the first school. The teacher, the mother, should be absolutely honest.

The nursery should not be an asylum for lies.

Parents should be modest enough to be truthful—honest enough to admit their ignorance. Nothing should be taught as true that cannot be demonstrated.

Every child should be taught to doubt, to inquire, to demand reasons. Every soul should defend itself—should be on its guard against falsehood, deceit, and mistake, and should beware of all kinds of confidence men, including those in the pulpit.

Children should be taught to express their doubts. The object of education

should be to develop the brain, to quicken the senses. Every school should be a mental gymnasium. The child should be equipped for the battle of life. Credulity, implicit obedience, are the virtues of slaves and the enslavers of the free. All should be taught that there is nothing too sacred to be investigated—too holy to be understood.

Each mind has the right to lift all curtains, withdraw all veils, scale all walls, explore all recesses, all heights, all depths for itself, in spite of church or priest, or creed or book.

The great volume of Nature should be open to all. None but the intelligent and honest can really read this book. Prejudice clouds and darkens every page. Hypocrisy reads and misquotes, and credulity accepts the quotation. Superstition cannot read a line or spell the shortest word. And yet this volume holds all knowledge, all truth, and is the only source of thought. Mental liberty means the right of all to read this book. Here the Pope and Peasant are equal. Each must read for himself, and each ought honestly and fearlessly to give to his fellow men what he learns.

There is no authority in Churches or priests—no authority in numbers or majorities. The only authority is Nature—the facts we know. Facts are the masters, the enemies of the ignorant, the servants and friends of the intelligent.

Ignorance is the mother of mystery and misery, of superstition and sorrow, of waste and want.

Intelligence is the only light. It enables us to keep the highway, to avoid the obstructions, and to take advantage of the forces of nature. It is the only lever capable of raising mankind. To develop the brain is to civilise the world. Intelligence reaves the heavens of winged and frightful monsters, drives ghosts and leering fiends from the darkness, and floods with light the dungeons of fear.

All should be taught that there is no evidence of the existence of the supernatural; that the man who bows before

an idol of wood or stone is just as foolish as the one who prays to an imagined God ; that all worship has for its foundation the same mistake, the same ignorance, the same fear ; that it is just as foolish to believe in a personal god as in a personal devil, just as foolish to believe in great ghosts as little ones.

So, all should be taught that the forces, the facts in Nature, cannot be controlled or changed by prayer or praise, by supplication, ceremony, or sacrifice ; that there is no magic, no miracle ; that force can be overcome only by force, and that the whole world is natural.

All should be taught that man must protect himself, that there is no power superior to Nature that cares for man, that Nature has neither pity nor hatred, that her forces act without the slightest regard for man, that she produces without intention and destroys without regret.

All should be taught that usefulness is the bud and flower and fruit of real religion. The popes and cardinals, the bishops, priests, and parsons, are all useless. They produce nothing. They live on the labour of others. They are parasites that feed on the frightened. They are vampires that suck the blood of honest toil. Every Church is an organised beggar. Every one lives on alms—on alms collected by force and fear. Every orthodox Church promises heaven and threatens hell, and these promises and threats are made for the sake of alms, for revenue. Every Church cries : " Believe and give."

A new era is dawning on the world. We are beginning to believe in the religion of usefulness.

The men who felled the forests, cultivated the earth, spanned the rivers with bridges of steel, built the railways and canals, the great ships, invented the locomotives and engines, supplying the countless wants of man ; the men who

invented the telegraphs and cables, and freighted the electric spark with thought and love ; the men who invented the looms and spindles that clothe the world, the inventors of printing and the great presses that fill the earth with poetry, fiction, and fact, that save and keep all knowledge for the children yet to be ; the inventors of all the wonderful machines that deftly mould from wood and steel the things we use ; the men who have explored the heavens and traced the orbits of the stars, who have read the story of the world in mountain range and billowed sea ; the men who have lengthened life and conquered pain ; the great philosophers and naturalists who have filled the world with light ; the great poets whose thoughts have charmed the souls, the great painters and sculptors who have made the canvas speak, the marble live ; the great orators who have swayed the world, the composers who have given their souls to sound, the captains of industry, the producers, the soldiers who have battled for the right, the vast host of useful men—these are our Christs, our apostles, and our saints. The triumphs of science are our miracles. The books filled with the facts of Nature are our sacred scriptures, and the force that is in every atom and in every star, in everything that lives and grows and thinks, that hopes and suffers, is the only possible god.

The absolute we cannot know ; beyond the horizon of the natural we cannot go. All our duties are within our reach ; all our obligations must be discharged here, in this world. Let us love and labour. Let us wait and work. Let us cultivate courage and cheerfulness, open our hearts to the good, our minds to the true. Let us live free lives. Let us hope that the future will bring peace and joy to all the children of men, and, above all, let us preserve the veracity of our souls.

THE GODS

AN HONEST GOD IS THE NOBLEST
WORK OF MAN.

EACH nation has created a god, and the god has always resembled his creators. He hated and loved what they hated and loved, and he was invariably found on the side of those in power. Each god was intensely patriotic, and detested all nations but his own. All these gods demanded praise, flattery, and worship. Most of them were pleased with sacrifice, and the smell of innocent blood has ever been considered a divine perfume. All these gods have insisted upon having a vast number of priests, and the priests have always insisted upon being supported by the people; and the principal business of these priests has been to boast about their god, and to insist that he could easily vanquish all the other gods put together.

These gods have been manufactured after numberless models, and according to the most grotesque fashions. Some have a thousand arms, some a hundred heads, some are adorned with necklaces of living snakes, some are armed with clubs, some with sword and shield, some with bucklers, and some have wings as a cherub; some were invisible, some would show themselves entire, and some would only show their backs; some were jealous, some were foolish, some turned themselves into men, some into swans, some into bulls, some into doves, and some into holy ghosts, and made love to the beautiful daughters of men. Some were married—all ought to have been—and some were considered as old bachelors from all eternity. Some had children, and the children were turned into gods and worshipped as their fathers had been. Most of these gods were revengeful, savage, lustful,

and ignorant. As they generally depended upon their priests for information, their ignorance can hardly excite our astonishment.

These gods did not even know the shape of the worlds they had created, but supposed them perfectly flat. Some thought the day could be lengthened by stopping the sun, that the blowing of horns could throw down the walls of a city; and all knew so little of the real nature of the people they had created that they commanded the people to love them. Some were so ignorant as to suppose that man could believe just as he might desire, or as they might command, and that to be governed by observation, reason, and experience was a most foul and damning sin. None of these gods could give a true account of the creation of this little earth. All were woefully deficient in geology and astronomy. As a rule, they were most miserable legislators, and, as executives, they were far inferior to the average of American presidents.

These deities have demanded the most abject and degrading obedience. In order to please them, man must lay his very face in the dust. Of course, they have always been partial to the people who created them, and have generally shown their partiality by assisting those people to rob and destroy others, and to ravish their wives and daughters.

Nothing is so pleasing to these gods as the butchery of unbelievers. Nothing so enrages them, even now, as to have someone deny their existence.

Few nations have been so poor as to have but one god. Gods were made so easily, and the raw material cost so little, that generally the god market was fairly glutted, and heaven crammed with these

phantoms. These gods not only attended to the skies, but were supposed to interfere in all the affairs of men. They presided over everybody and everything. They attended to every department. All was supposed to be under their immediate control. Nothing was too small—nothing too large; the falling of sparrows and the motions of the planets were alike attended to by these industrious and observing deities. From their starry thrones they frequently came to the earth for the purpose of imparting information to man. It is related of one that he came amid thunderings and lightnings in order to tell the people that they should not cook a kid in its mother's milk. Some left their shining abodes to tell women that they should, or should not, have children; to inform a priest how to cut and wear his apron; and to give directions as to the proper manner of cleaning the intestines of a bird.

When the people failed to worship one of these gods, or failed to feed and clothe his priests (which was much the same thing), he generally visited them with pestilence and famine. Sometimes he allowed some other nation to drag them into slavery—to sell their wives and children; but generally he glutted his vengeance by murdering their first-born. The priests always did their whole duty, not only in predicting these calamities, but in proving, when they did happen, that they were brought upon the people because they had not given quite enough to them.

These gods differed just as the nations differed; the greatest and most powerful had the most powerful gods, while the weaker ones were obliged to content themselves with the very off-scourings of the heavens. Each of these gods promised happiness here and hereafter to all his slaves, and threatened to eternally punish all who either disbelieved in his existence or suspected that some other god might be his superior; but to deny the existence of all gods was, and is, the crime of crimes. Redden your hands

with human blood; blast by slander the fair fame of the innocent; strangle the smiling child upon its mother's knees; deceive, ruin, and desert the beautiful girl who loves and trusts you, and your case is not hopeless. For all this, and for all these, you may be forgiven. For all this, and for all these, that bankrupt court established by the Gospel will give you a discharge; but deny the existence of these divine ghosts, of these gods, and the sweet and tearful face of Mercy becomes livid with eternal hate. Heaven's golden gates are shut, and you, with an infinite curse ringing in your ears, with the brand of infamy upon your brow, commence your endless wanderings in the lurid gloom of hell—an immortal vagrant—an eternal outcast—a deathless convict.

One of these gods, and one who demands our love, our admiration, and our worship, and one who is worshipped, if mere heartless ceremony is worship, gave to his chosen people for their guidance the following laws of war: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, *then proclaim peace unto it.* And it shall be if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it unto thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, *thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.*"

Is it possible for man to conceive of

anything more perfectly infamous? Can you believe that such directions were given by any being except an infinite fiend? Remember that the army receiving these instructions was one of invasion. Peace was offered upon condition that the people submitting should be the slaves of the invader; but if any should have the courage to defend their homes, to fight for the love of wife and child, then the sword was to spare none—not even the prattling, dimpled babe.

And we are called upon to worship such a god; to get upon our knees and tell him that he is good, that he is merciful, that he is just, that he is love. We are asked to stifle every noble sentiment of the soul, and to trample under foot all the sweet charities of the heart. Because we refuse to stultify ourselves—refuse to become liars—we are denounced, hated, traduced, and ostracised here; and this same god threatens to torment us in eternal fire the moment death allows him to fiercely clutch our naked, helpless souls. Let the people hate, let the god threaten—we will educate them, and we will despise and defy him.

The book called the Bible is filled with passages equally horrible, unjust, and atrocious. This is the book to be read in schools in order to make our children loving, kind, and gentle! This is the book to be recognised in our Constitution as the source of all authority and justice!

Strange! that no one has ever been persecuted by the Church for believing God bad, while hundreds of millions have been destroyed for thinking him good. The orthodox Church never will forgive the Universalist for saying "God is love." It has always been considered as one of the very highest evidences of true and undefiled religion to insist that all men, women, and children deserve eternal damnation. It has always been heresy to say, "God will at last save all."

We are asked to justify these frightful passages, these infamous laws of war, because the Bible is the word of God. As a matter of fact, there never was, and

there never can be, an argument even tending to prove the inspiration of any book whatever. In the absence of positive evidence, analogy, and experience, argument is simply impossible, and, at the very best, can amount only to a useless agitation of the air. The instant we admit that a book is too sacred to be doubted, or even reasoned about, we are mental serfs. It is infinitely absurd to suppose that a god would address a communication to intelligent beings, and yet make it a crime, to be punished in eternal flames, for them to use their intelligence for the purpose of understanding his communication. If we have the right to use our reason, we certainly have the right to act in accordance with it, and no god can have the right to punish us for such action.

The doctrine that future happiness depends upon belief is monstrous. The notion that faith in Christ is to be rewarded by an eternity of bliss, while a dependence upon reason, observation, and experience merits everlasting pain, is too absurd for refutation, and can be relieved only by that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance called "faith." What man, who ever thinks, can believe that blood can appease God? And yet our entire system of religion is based upon that belief. The Jews pacified Jehovah with the blood of animals, and, according to the Christian system, the blood of Jesus softened the heart of God a little, and rendered possible the salvation of a fortunate few. It is hard to conceive how the human mind can give assent to such terrible ideas, or how any sane man can read the Bible and still believe in the doctrine of inspiration.

Whether the Bible is true or false is of no consequence in comparison with the mental freedom of the race.

Salvation through slavery is worthless. Salvation from slavery is inestimable.

As long as man believes the Bible to be infallible, that book is his master. The civilisation of this century is not the child of faith, but of unbelief—the result of free thought.

All that is necessary, as it seems to me, to convince any reasonable person that the Bible is simply and purely of human invention—of barbarian invention—is to read it. Read it as you would any other book; think of it as you would of any other; get the bandage of reverence from your eyes; drive from your heart the phantom of fear; push from the throne of your brain the cowed form of superstition—then read the Holy Bible, and you will be amazed that you ever, for one moment, supposed a being of infinite wisdom, goodness, and purity to be the author of such ignorance and of such atrocity.

Our ancestors not only had their god-factories, but they made devils as well. These devils were generally disgraced and fallen gods. Some had headed unsuccessful revolts; some had been caught sweetly reclining in the shadowy folds of some fleecy cloud, kissing the wife of the god of gods. These devils generally sympathised with man. There is in regard to them a most wonderful fact: In nearly all the theologies, mythologies, and religions the devils have been much more humane and merciful than the gods. No devil ever gave one of his generals an order to kill children and to rip open the bodies of pregnant women. Such barbarities were always ordered by the good gods. The pestilences were sent by the most merciful gods. The frightful famine, during which the dying child with pallid lips sucked the withered bosom of a dead mother, was sent by the loving gods. No devil was ever charged with such fiendish brutality.

One of these gods, according to the account, drowned an entire world, with the exception of eight persons. The old, the young, the beautiful, and the helpless were remorselessly devoured by the shoreless sea. This, the most fearful tragedy that the imagination of ignorant priests ever conceived, was the act, not of a devil, but of a god, so-called, whom men ignorantly worship unto this day. What a stain such an act would

leave upon the character of a devil! One of the prophets of one of these gods, having in his power a captured king, hewed him in pieces in the sight of all the people. Was ever any imp of any devil guilty of such savagery?

One of these gods is reported to have given the following directions concerning human slavery: "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free'; then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him unto the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever."

According to this, a man was given liberty upon condition that he would desert for ever his wife and children. Did any devil ever force upon a husband, upon a father, so cruel and so heartless an alternative? Who can worship such a god? Who can bend the knee to such a monster? Who can pray to such a fiend?

All these gods threatened to torment for ever the souls of their enemies. Did any devil ever make so infamous a threat? The basest thing recorded of the devil is what he did concerning Job and his family, and that was done by the express permission of one of these gods, and to decide a little difference of opinion between their serene highnesses as to the character of "my servant Job."

The first account we have of the devil is found in that purely scientific book called Genesis, and is as follows: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of

the fruit of the trees of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.....And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man, and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."

According to this account the promise of the devil was fulfilled to the very letter. Adam and Eve did not die, and they did become as gods, knowing good and evil.

The account shows, however, that the gods dreaded education and knowledge then, just as they do now. The Church still faithfully guards the dangerous tree of knowledge, and has exerted in all ages her utmost power to keep mankind from eating the fruit thereof. The priests have never ceased repeating the old falsehood and the old threat: "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." From every pulpit comes the same cry, born of the same fear: "Lest they eat and become as gods, knowing good and evil." For this reason, religion hates science, faith detests reason, theology is the sworn enemy of philosophy, and the Church with its flaming sword still guards

the hated tree, and, like its supposed founder, curses to the lowest depths the brave thinkers who eat and become as gods.

If the account given in Genesis is really true, ought we not, after all, to thank this serpent? He was the first schoolmaster, the first advocate of learning, the first enemy of ignorance, the first to whisper in human ears the sacred word "liberty," the creator of ambition, the author of modesty, of inquiry, of doubt, of investigation, of progress, and of civilisation.

Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith! Banish me from Eden when you will; but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge!

Some nations have borrowed their gods; of this number, we are compelled to say, is our own. The Jews having ceased to exist as a nation, and having no further use for a god, our ancestors appropriated him and adopted their devil at the same time. This borrowed god is still an object of some adoration, and this adopted devil still excites the apprehensions of our people. He is still supposed to be setting his traps and snares for the purpose of catching our unwary souls, and is still, with reasonable success, waging the old war against our god.

To me, it seems easy to account for these ideas concerning gods and devils. They are a perfectly natural production. Man has created them all, and under the same circumstances would create them again. Man has not only created all these gods, but he has created them out of the materials by which he has been surrounded. Generally, he has modelled them after himself, and has given them hands, heads, feet, eyes, ears, and organs of speech. Each nation made its gods and devils speak its language not only, but put in their mouths the same mistakes in history, geography, astronomy, and in all matters of fact, generally made by the people.

No god was ever in advance of the nation that created him. The negroes represented their deities with black skins and curly hair. The Mongolian gave to his a yellow complexion and dark, almond-shaped eyes. The Jews were not allowed to paint theirs, or we should have seen Jehovah with a full beard, an oval face, and an aquiline nose. Zeus was a perfect Greek, and Jove looked as though a member of the Roman senate. The gods of Egypt had the patient face and placid look of the loving people who made them. The gods of northern countries were represented warmly clad in robes of fur; those of the tropics were naked. The gods of India were often mounted upon elephants; those of some islanders were great swimmers, and the deities of the Arctic zone were passionately fond of whale's blubber. Nearly all people have carved or painted representations of their gods, and these representations were, by the lower classes, generally treated as the real gods, and to these images and idols they addressed prayers and offered sacrifice.

"In some countries, even at this day, if the people after long praying do not obtain their desires, they turn their images off as impotent gods, or upbraid them in a most reproachful manner, loading them with blows and curses. 'How now, dog of a spirit,' they say, 'we give you lodging in a magnificent temple, we gild you with gold, feed you with the choicest food, and offer incense to you; yet, after all this care, you are so ungrateful as to refuse us what we ask.' Hereupon they will pull the god down and drag him through the filth of the street. If, in the meantime, it happens that they obtain their request, then, with a great deal of ceremony, they wash him clean, carry him back and place him in his temple again, where they fall down and make excuses for what they have done. 'Of a truth,' they say, 'we were a little too hasty, and you were a little too long in your grant. Why should you bring this beating on

yourself? But what is done cannot be undone. Let us not think of it any more. If you will forget what is past, we will gild you over brighter again than before.'"

Man has never been at a loss for gods. He has worshipped almost everything, including the vilest and most disgusting beasts. He has worshipped fire, earth, air, water, light, stars, and for hundreds of ages prostrated himself before enormous snakes. Savage tribes often make gods of articles they get from civilised people. The Todas worship a cow-bell. The Kotas worship two silver plates, which they regard as husband and wife; and another tribe manufactured a god out of a king of hearts.

Man, having always been the physical superior of woman, accounts for the fact that most of the high gods have been males. Had woman been the physical superior, the powers supposed to be the rulers of nature would have been women, and, instead of being represented in the apparel of man, they would have luxuriated in trains, low-necked dresses, laces, and back-hair.

Nothing can be plainer than that each nation gives to its gods its peculiar characteristics, and that every individual gives to his god his personal peculiarities.

Man has no ideas, and can have none, except those suggested by his surroundings. He cannot conceive of anything utterly unlike what he has seen or felt. He can exaggerate, diminish, combine, separate, deform, beautify, improve, multiply, and compare what he sees, what he feels, what he hears, and all of which he takes cognisance through the medium of the senses; but he cannot create. Having seen exhibitions of power, he can say, omnipotent. Having lived, he can say, immortality. Knowing something of time, he can say, eternity. Conceiving something of intelligence, he can say, God. Having seen exhibitions of malice, he can say, devil. A few gleams of happiness having fallen athwart the gloom of his life, he can

say, heaven. Pain, in its numberless forms, having been experienced, he can say, hell. Yet all these ideas have a foundation in fact, and only a foundation. The superstructure has been reared by exaggerating, diminishing, combining, separating, deforming, beautifying, improving, or multiplying realities, so that the edifice or fabric is but the incongruous grouping of what man has perceived through the medium of the senses. It is as though we should give to a lion the wings of an eagle, the hoofs of a bison, the tail of a horse, the pouch of a kangaroo, and the trunk of an elephant. We have in imagination created an impossible monster. And yet the various parts of this monster really exist. So it is with all the gods that man has made.

Beyond nature man cannot go even in thought—above nature he cannot rise—below nature he cannot fall.

Man, in his ignorance, supposed that all phenomena were produced by some intelligent powers, and with direct reference to him. To preserve friendly relations with these powers was, and still is, the object of all religions. Man knelt through fear and to implore assistance, or through gratitude for some favour which he supposed had been rendered. He endeavoured by supplication to appease some being who, for some reason, had, as he believed, become enraged. The lightning and thunder terrified him. In the presence of the volcano he sank upon his knees. The great forests filled with wild and ferocious beasts, the monstrous serpents crawling in mysterious depths, the boundless sea, the flaming comets, the sinister eclipses, the awful calmness of the stars, and, more than all, the perpetual presence of death, convinced him that he was the sport and prey of unseen and malignant powers. The strange and frightful diseases to which he was subject, the freezings and burnings of fever, the contortions of epilepsy, the sudden palsies, the darkness of night, and the wild, terrible, and fantastic dreams that filled

his brain, satisfied him that he was haunted and pursued by countless spirits of evil. For some reason he supposed that these spirits differed in power—that they were not all alike malevolent—that the higher controlled the lower, and that his very existence depended upon gaining the assistance of the more powerful. For this purpose he resorted to prayer, to flattery, to worship, and to sacrifice. These ideas appear to have been almost universal in savage man.

For ages all nations supposed that the sick and insane were possessed by evil spirits. For thousands of years the practice of medicine consisted in frightening these spirits away. Usually the priests would make the loudest and most discordant noise possible. They would blow horns, beat upon rude drums, clash cymbals, and in the meantime utter the most unearthly yells. If the noise-remedy failed, they would implore the aid of some more powerful spirit.

To pacify these spirits was considered of infinite importance. The poor barbarian, knowing that men could be softened by gifts, gave to these spirits that which to him seemed of the most value. With bursting heart he would offer the blood of his dearest child. It was impossible for him to conceive of a god utterly unlike himself, and he naturally supposed that these powers of the air would be affected a little at the sight of so great and so deep a sorrow. It was with the barbarian then as with the civilised now—one class lived upon and made merchandise of the fears of another. Certain persons took it upon themselves to appease the gods, and to instruct the people in their duties to these unscen powers. This was the origin of the priesthood. The priest pretended to stand between the wrath of the gods and the helplessness of man. He was man's attorney at the court of heaven. He carried to the invisible world a flag of truce, a protest, and a request. He came back with a command, with authority, and with power.

Man fell upon his knees before his own servant, and the priest, taking advantage of the awe inspired by his supposed influence with the gods, made of his fellow-man a cringing hypocrite and slave. Even Christ, the supposed son of God, taught that persons were possessed of evil spirits, and frequently, according to the account, gave proof of his divine origin and mission by frightening droves of devils out of his unfortunate countrymen. Casting out devils was his principal employment, and the devils thus banished generally took occasion to acknowledge him as the true Messiah; which was not only very kind of them, but quite fortunate for him. The religious people have always regarded the testimony of these devils as perfectly conclusive, and the writers of the New Testament quote the words of these imps of darkness with great satisfaction.

The fact that Christ could withstand the temptations of the devil was considered as conclusive evidence that he was assisted by some god, or at least by some being superior to man. St. Matthew gives an account of an attempt made by the devil to tempt the supposed son of God; and it has always excited the wonder of Christians that the temptation was so nobly and heroically withstood. The account to which I refer is as follows:—

“Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when the tempter came to him, he said: ‘If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread.’ But he answered, and said: ‘It is written: man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city and setteth him upon a pinnacle of the temple and saith unto him: ‘If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time thou shalt dash thy foot against a stone.’ Jesus said unto him:

‘It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’ Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and saith unto him: ‘All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.’”

The Christians now claim that Jesus was God. If he was God, of course the devil knew that fact, and yet, according to this account, the devil took the omnipotent God and placed him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and endeavoured to induce him to dash himself against the earth. Failing in that, he took the creator, owner, and governor of the universe up into an exceeding high mountain, and offered him this world—this grain of sand—if he, the God of all the worlds, would fall down and worship him, a poor devil, without even a tax title to one foot of dirt! Is it possible the devil was such an idiot? Should any great credit be given to this deity for not being caught with such chaff? Think of it! The devil—the prince of sharpers—the king of cunning—the master of finesse, trying to bribe God with a grain of sand that belonged to God!

Is there in all the religious literature of the world anything more grossly absurd than this?

These devils, according to the Bible, were of various kinds—some could speak and hear, others were deaf and dumb. All could not be cast out in the same way. The deaf and dumb spirits were quite difficult to deal with. St. Mark tells of a gentleman who brought his son to Christ. The boy, it seems, was possessed of a dumb spirit, over which the disciples had no control. “Jesus said unto the spirit: ‘Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him.’” Whereupon, the deaf spirit (having heard what was said) cried out (being dumb), and immediately vacated the premises. The ease with which Christ controlled this deaf and dumb spirit excited the wonder of his

disciples, and they asked him privately why they could not cast that spirit out. To whom he replied: "This kind can come forth by nothing but prayer and fasting." Is there a Christian in the whole world who would believe such a story if found in any other book? The trouble is, these pious people shut up their reason, and then open their Bible.

In the olden times the existence of devils was universally admitted. The people had no doubt upon that subject, and from such belief it followed as a matter of course that a person, in order to vanquish these devils, had either to be a god or to be assisted by one. All founders of religions have established their claims to divine origin by controlling evil spirits and suspending the laws of nature. Casting out devils was a certificate of divinity. A prophet unable to cope with the powers of darkness was regarded with contempt. The utterance of the highest and noblest sentiments, the most blameless and holy life, commanded but little respect unless accompanied by power to work miracles and command spirits.

This belief in good and evil powers had its origin in the fact that man was surrounded by what he was pleased to call good and evil phenomena. Phenomena affecting man pleasantly were ascribed to good spirits, while those affecting him unpleasantly or injuriously were ascribed to evil spirits. It being admitted that all phenomena were produced by spirits, the spirits were divided according to the phenomena, and the phenomena were good or bad as they affected man. Good spirits were supposed to be the authors of good phenomena, and evil spirits of the evil—so that the idea of a devil has been as universal as the idea of a god.

Many writers maintain that an idea to become universal must be true; that all universal ideas are innate, and that innate ideas cannot be false. If the fact that an idea has been universal proves that it is innate, and if the fact that an idea is innate proves that it is correct,

then the believers in innate ideas must admit that the evidence of a god superior to nature, and of a devil superior to nature, is exactly the same, and that the existence of such a devil must be as self-evident as the existence of such a god. The truth is, a god was inferred from good, and a devil from bad, phenomena. And it is just as natural and logical to suppose that a devil would cause happiness as to suppose that a god would produce misery. Consequently, if an intelligence, infinite and supreme, is the immediate author of all phenomena, it is difficult to determine whether such intelligence is the friend or enemy of man. If phenomena were all good, we might say they were all produced by a perfectly beneficent being. If they were all bad, we might say they were produced by a perfectly malevolent power; but, as phenomena are, as they affect man, both good and bad, they must be produced by different and antagonistic spirits; by one who is sometimes actuated by kindness, and sometimes by malice; or all must be produced of a necessity, and without reference to their consequences upon man.

The foolish doctrine that all phenomena can be traced to the interference of good and evil spirits has been, and still is, almost universal. That most people still believe in some spirit that can change the natural order of events is proven by the fact that nearly all resort to prayer. Thousands, at this very moment, are probably imploring some supposed power to interfere in their behalf. Some want health restored; some ask that the loved and absent be watched over and protected, some pray for riches, some for rain, some want diseases stayed, some vainly ask for food, some ask for revivals, a few ask for more wisdom, and now and then one tells the Lord to do as he may think best. Thousands ask to be protected from the devil; some, like David, pray for revenge, and some implore even God not to lead them into temptation. All these prayers rest upon, and are produced by, the idea

that some power not only can, but probably will, change the order of the universe. This belief has been among the great majority of tribes and nations. All sacred books are filled with the accounts of such interferences, and our own Bible is no exception to this rule.

If we believe in a power superior to nature, it is perfectly natural to suppose that such power can and will interfere in the affairs of this world. If there is no interference, of what practical use can such power be? The scriptures give us the most wonderful accounts of divine interference: Animals talk like men; springs gurggle from dry bones; the sun and moon stop in the heavens in order that General Joshua may have more time to murder; the shadow on a dial goes back ten degrees to convince a petty king of a barbarous people that he is not going to die of a boil; fire refuses to burn; water positively declines to seek its level, but stands up like a wall; grains of sand become lice; common walking-sticks, to gratify a mere freak, twist themselves into serpents, and then swallow each other by way of exercise; murmuring streams, laughing at the attraction of gravitation, run up hill for years, following wandering tribes from a pure love of frolic; prophecy becomes altogether easier than history; the sons of God become enamoured of the world's girls; women are changed into salt for the purpose of keeping a great event fresh in the minds of men; an excellent article of brimstone is imported from heaven free of duty; clothes refuse to wear out for forty years; birds keep restaurants and feed wandering prophets free of expense; bears tear children in pieces for laughing at old men without wigs; muscular development depends upon the length of one's hair; dead people come to life, simply to get a joke on their enemies and heirs; witches and wizards converse freely with the souls of the departed; and God himself becomes a stone-cutter and engraver, after having been a tailor and dressmaker.

The veil between heaven and earth

was always rent or lifted. The shadows of this world, the radiance of heaven, and the glare of hell mixed and mingled until man became uncertain as to which country he really inhabited. Man dwelt in an unreal world. He mistook his ideas, his dreams, for real things. His fears became terrible and malicious monsters. He lived in the midst of furies and fairies, nymphs and naiads, goblins and ghosts, witches and wizards, sprites and spooks, deities and devils. The obscure and gloomy depths were filled with claw and wing, with beak and hoof, with leering looks and sneering mouths, with the malice of deformity, with the cunning of hatred, and with all the slimy forms that fear can draw and paint upon the shadowy canvas of the dark.

It is enough to make one almost insane with pity to think what man in the long night has suffered; of the tortures he has endured, surrounded, as he supposed, by malignant powers and clutched by the fierce phantoms of the air. No wonder that he fell upon his trembling knees—that he built altars and reddened them even with his own blood. No wonder that he implored ignorant priests and impudent magicians for aid. No wonder that he crawled grovelling in the dust to the temple's door, and there, in the insanity of despair, besought the deaf gods to hear his bitter cry of agony and fear.

The savage, as he emerges from a state of barbarism, gradually loses faith in his idols of wood and stone, and in their place puts a multitude of spirits. As he advances in knowledge he generally discards the petty spirits, and in their stead believes in one, whom he supposes to be infinite and supreme. Supposing this great spirit to be superior to nature, he offers worship or flattery in exchange for assistance. At last, finding that he obtains no aid from this supposed deity—finding that every search after the absolute must of necessity end in failure—finding that man cannot by any possibility conceive of the conditionless—he

begins to investigate the facts by which he is surrounded, and to depend upon himself.

The people are beginning to think, to reason, and to investigate. Slowly, painfully, but surely, the gods are being driven from the earth. Only upon rare occasions are they, even by the most religious, supposed to interfere in the affairs of men. In most matters we are at last supposed to be free. Since the invention of steamships and railways, so that the products of all countries can be easily interchanged, the gods have quit the business of producing famine. Now and then they kill a child because it is idolised by its parents. As a rule, they have given up causing accidents on railroads, exploding boilers, and bursting kerosene lamps. Cholera, yellow fever, and small-pox are still considered heavenly weapons; but measles, itch, and ague are now attributed to natural causes. As a general thing, the gods have stopped drowning children, except as a punishment for violating the Sabbath. They still pay some attention to the affairs of kings, men of genius, and persons of great wealth; but ordinary people are left to shirk for themselves as best they may. In wars between great nations the gods still interfere; but in prize fights the best man, with an honest referee, is almost sure to win.

The Church cannot abandon the idea of special providence. To give up that doctrine is to give up all. The Church must insist that prayer is answered—that some power superior to nature hears and grants the request of the sincere and humble Christian, and that this same power in some mysterious way provides for all.

A devout clergyman sought every opportunity to impress upon the mind of his son the fact that God takes care of all his creatures; that the falling sparrow attracts his attention, and that his loving kindness is over all his works. Happening one day to see a crane wading in quest of food, the good man pointed out to his son the perfect adapta-

tion of the crane to get his living in that manner. "See," said he, "how his legs are formed for wading! What a long, slender bill he has! Observe how nicely he folds his feet when putting them in or drawing them out of the water! He does not cause the slightest ripple. He is thus enabled to approach the fish without giving them any notice of his arrival. My son," said he, "it is impossible to look at that bird without recognising the design, as well as the goodness, of God in thus providing the means of subsistence."

"Yes," replied the boy, "I think I see the goodness of God, at least so far as the crane is concerned; but, after all, father, don't you think the arrangement a little tough on the fish?"

Even the advanced religionist, although disbelieving in any great amount of interference by the gods in this age of the world, still thinks that in the beginning some god made the laws governing the universe. He believes that in consequence of these laws a man can lift a greater weight with, than without, a lever; that this god so made matter, and so established the order of things, that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time; so that a body once put in motion will keep moving until it is stopped; so that it is a greater distance around than across a circle; so that a perfect square has four equal sides, instead of five or seven. He insists that it took a direct interposition of Providence to make the whole greater than a part, and that, had it not been for this power superior to nature, twice one might have been more than twice two, and sticks and strings might have had only one end apiece. Like the old Scotch divine, he thanks God that Sunday comes at the end instead of in the middle of the week, and that death comes at the close instead of at the commencement of life, thereby giving us time to prepare for that holy day and that most solemn event. These religious people see nothing but design everywhere, and personal, intelligent interference in

everything. They insist that the universe has been created, and that the adaptation of means to ends is perfectly apparent. They point us to the sunshine, to the flowers, to the April rain, and to all there is of beauty and of use in the world. Did it ever occur to them that a cancer is as beautiful in its development as is the reddest rose? That what they are pleased to call the adaptation of means to ends is as apparent in the cancer as in the April rain? How beautiful the process of digestion! By what ingenious methods the blood is poisoned so that the cancer shall have food! By what wonderful contrivances the entire system of man is made to pay tribute to this divine and charming cancer! See by what admirable instrumentalities it feeds itself from the surrounding quivering, dainty flesh! See how it gradually but surely expands and grows! By what marvellous mechanism it is supplied with long and slender roots that reach out to the most secret nerves of pain for sustenance and life! What beautiful colours it presents! Seen through the microscope it is a miracle of order and beauty. All the ingenuity of man cannot stop its growth. Think of the amount of thought it must have required to invent a way by which the life of one man might be given to produce one cancer! Is it possible to look upon it and doubt that there is design in the universe, and that the inventor of this wonderful cancer must be infinitely powerful, ingenious, and good?

We are told that the universe was designed and created, and that it is absurd to suppose that matter has existed from eternity, but that it is perfectly self-evident that a god has.

If a god created the universe, then there must have been a time when he commenced to create. Back of that time there must have been an eternity, during which there had existed nothing—absolutely nothing—except this supposed god. According to this theory, this god spent an eternity, so to speak,

in an infinite vacuum, and in perfect idleness.

Admitting that a god did create the universe, the question then arises, of what did he create it? It certainly was not made of nothing. Nothing, considered in the light of a raw material, is a most decided failure. It follows, then, that the god must have made the universe out of himself, he being the only existence. The universe is material, and, if it was made of god, the god must have been material. With this very thought in his mind, Anaximander of Miletus said: "Creation is the decomposition of the infinite."

It has been demonstrated that the earth would fall to the sun, only for the fact that it is attracted by other worlds, and those worlds must be attracted by other worlds still beyond them, and so on without end. This proves the material universe to be infinite. If an infinite universe has been made out of an infinite god, how much of the god is left?

The idea of a creative deity is gradually being abandoned, and nearly all truly scientific minds admit that matter must have existed from eternity. It is indestructible, and the indestructible cannot be created. It is the crowning glory of our century to have demonstrated the indestructibility and the eternal persistence of force. Neither matter nor force can be increased nor diminished. Force cannot exist apart from matter. Matter exists only in connection with force, and, consequently, a force apart from matter, and superior to nature, is a demonstrated impossibility.

Force, then, must have also existed from eternity, and could not have been created. Matter in its countless forms, from dead earth to the eyes of those we love, and force, in all its manifestations, from simple motion to the grandest thought, deny creation and defy control.

Thought is a form of force. We walk with the same force with which we think. Man is an organism, that changes several forms of force into thought-force. Man

is a machine into which we put what we call food, and produce what we call thought. Think of that wonderful chemistry by which bread was changed into the divine tragedy of Hamlet!

A god must not only be material, but he must be an organism, capable of changing other forms of force into thought-force. This is what we call eating. Therefore, if the god thinks, he must eat—that is to say, he must of necessity have some means of supplying the force with which to think. It is impossible to conceive of a being who can eternally impart force to matter, and yet have no means of supplying the force thus imparted.

If neither matter nor force were created, what evidence have we, then, of the existence of a power superior to nature? The theologian will probably reply: "We have law and order, cause and effect, and, beside all this, matter could not have put itself in motion."

Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that there is no being superior to nature, and that matter and force have existed from eternity. Now, suppose that two atoms should come together, would there be an effect? Yes. Suppose they came in exactly opposite directions with equal force, they would be stopped, to say the least. This would be an effect. If this is so, then you have matter, force, and effect without a being superior to nature. Now, suppose that two other atoms, just like the first two, should come together under precisely the same circumstances, would not the effect be exactly the same? Yes. Like causes, producing like effects, is what we mean by law and order. Then we have matter, force, effect, law, and order without a being superior to nature. Now, we know that every effect must also be a cause, and that every cause must be an effect. The atoms coming together did produce an effect, and as every effect must also be a cause, the effect produced by the collision of the atoms must as to something else have been a cause. Then we have matter, force, law, order, cause, and

effect without a being superior to nature. Nothing is left for the supernatural but empty space. His throne is a void, and his boasted realm is without matter, without force, without law, without cause, and without effect.

But what put all this matter in motion? If matter and force have existed from eternity, then matter must have always been in motion. There can be no force without motion. Force is forever active, and there is, and there can be, no cessation. If, therefore, matter and force have existed from eternity, so has motion. In the whole universe there is not even one atom in a state of rest.

A deity outside of nature exists in nothing, and is nothing. Nature embraces with infinite arms all matter and all force. That which is beyond her grasp is destitute of both, and can hardly be worth the worship and adoration even of a man.

There is but one way to demonstrate the existence of a power independent of and superior to nature, and that is by breaking, if only for one moment, the continuity of cause and effect. Pluck from the endless chain of existence one little link; stop for one instant the grand procession, and you have shown beyond all contradiction that nature has a master. Change the fact, just for one second, that matter attracts matter, and a god appears.

The rudest savage has always known this fact, and for that reason always demanded the evidence of miracle. The founder of a religion must be able to turn water into wine—cure with a word the blind and lame, and raise with a simple touch the dead to life. It was necessary for him to demonstrate to the satisfaction of his barbarian disciple that he was superior to nature. In times of ignorance this was easy to do. The credulity of the savage was almost boundless. To him the marvellous was the beautiful, the mysterious was the sublime. Consequently, every religion has for its foundation a miracle—that is to say, a violation of nature—that is to say, a falsehood.

No one, in the world's whole history, ever attempted to substantiate a truth by a miracle. Truth scorns the assistance of miracle. Nothing but falsehood ever attested itself by signs and wonders. No miracle ever was performed, and no sane man ever thought he had performed one, and until one is performed there can be no evidence of the existence of any power superior to, and independent of, nature.

The Church wishes us to believe. Let the Church, or one of its intellectual saints, perform a miracle, and we will believe. We are told that nature has a superior. Let this superior, for one single instant, control nature, and we will admit the truth of your assertions.

We have heard talk enough. We have listened to all the drowsy, idealess, vapid sermons that we wish to hear. We have read your Bible and the works of your best minds. We have heard your prayers, your solemn groans, and your reverential amens. All these amount to less than nothing. We want one fact. We beg at the doors of your churches for just one little fact. We pass our hat along your pews and under your pulpits, and implore you for just one fact. We know all about your mouldy wonders and your stale miracles. We want a this year's fact. We ask only one. Give us one fact for charity. Your miracles are too ancient. The witnesses have been dead for nearly two thousand years. Their reputation for "truth and veracity" in the neighbourhood where they resided is wholly unknown to us. Give us a new miracle, and substantiate it by witnesses who still have the cheerful habit of living in this world. Do not send us to Jericho to hear the winding horns, nor put us in the fire with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. Do not compel us to navigate the sea with Captain Jonah, nor dine with Mr. Ezekiel. There is no sort of use in sending us fox-hunting with Samson. We have positively lost all interest in that little speech so eloquently delivered by Balaam's inspired donkey. It is

worse than useless to show us fishes with money in their mouths, and call our attention to vast multitudes stuffing themselves with five crackers and two sardines. We demand a new miracle, and we demand it now. Let the Church furnish at least one, or forever after hold her peace.

In the olden time the Church, by violating the order of nature, proved the existence of her God. At that time miracles were performed with the most astonishing ease. They became so common that the Church ordered her priests to desist. And now this same Church—the people having found some little sense—admits not only that she cannot perform a miracle, but insists that the absence of miracle, the steady, unbroken, march of cause and effect, proves the existence of a power superior to nature. The fact is, however, that the indissoluble chain of cause and effect proves exactly the contrary.

Sir William Hamilton, one of the pillars of modern theology, in discussing this very subject, uses the following language: "The phenomena of matter, taken by themselves, so far from warranting any inference to the existence of a god, would on the contrary ground even an argument to his negation. The phenomena of the material world are subjected to immutable laws; are produced and reproduced in the same invariable succession, and manifest only the blind force of a mechanical necessity."

Nature is but an endless series of efficient causes. She cannot create, but she eternally transforms. There was no beginning, and there can be no end.

The best minds, even in the religious world, admit that in material nature there is no evidence of what they are pleased to call a god. They find their evidence in the phenomena of intelligence, and very innocently assert that intelligence is above, and, in fact, opposed to, nature. They insist that man, at least, is a special creation; that he has somewhere in his brain a divine

spark, a little portion of the "Great First Cause." They say that matter cannot produce thought, but that thought can produce matter. They tell us that man has intelligence, and therefore there must be an intelligence greater than his. Why not say: God has intelligence, therefore there must be an intelligence greater than his? So far as we know, there is no intelligence apart from matter. We cannot conceive of thought except as produced within a brain.

The science by means of which they demonstrate the existence of an impossible intelligence and an incomprehensible power is called metaphysics or theology. The theologians admit that the phenomena of matter tend, at least, to disprove the existence of any power superior to nature, because in such phenomena we see nothing but an endless chain of efficient causes—nothing but the force of a mechanical necessity. They therefore appeal to what they denominate the phenomena of mind to establish this superior power.

The trouble is, that in the phenomena of mind we find the same endless chain of efficient causes; the same mechanical necessity. Every thought must have had an efficient cause. Every motive, every desire, every fear, hope, and dream must have been necessarily produced. There is no room in the mind of man for providence or chance. The facts and forces governing thought are as absolute as those governing the motions of the planets. A poem is produced by the forces of nature, and is as necessarily and naturally produced as mountains and seas. You will seek in vain for a thought in man's brain without its efficient cause. Every mental operation is the necessary result of certain facts and conditions. Mental phenomena are considered more complicated than those of matter, and consequently more mysterious. Being more mysterious, they are considered better evidence of the existence of a god. No one infers a god from the simple, from the known, from

what is understood, but from the complex, from the unknown, and incomprehensible. Our ignorance is God; what we know is science.

When we abandon the doctrine that some infinite being created matter and force, and enacted a code of laws for their government, the idea of interference will be lost. The real priest will then be, not the mouth-piece of some pretended deity, but the interpreter of nature. From that moment the Church ceases to exist. The tapers will die out upon the dusty altar; the moths will eat the fading velvet of pulpit and pew; the Bible will take its place with the Shastras, Puranas, Vedas, Eddas, Sagas, and Korans, and the fetters of a degrading faith will fall from the minds of men.

"But," says the religionist, "you cannot explain everything; you cannot understand everything; and that which you cannot explain, that which you do not comprehend, is my God."

We are explaining more every day. We are understanding more every day; consequently your God is growing smaller every day.

Nothing daunted, the religionist then insists that nothing can exist without a cause except cause, and that this uncaused cause is God.

To this we again reply: Every cause must produce an effect, because until it does produce an effect it is not a cause. Every effect must in its turn become a cause. Therefore, in the nature of things, there cannot be a last cause, for the reason that a so-called last cause would necessarily produce an effect, and that effect must of necessity become a cause. The converse of these propositions must be true. Every effect must have had a cause, and every cause have been an effect. Therefore, there could have been no first cause. A first cause is just as impossible as a last effect.

Beyond the universe there is nothing, and within the universe the supernatural does not and cannot exist.

The moment these great truths are understood and admitted, a belief in

general or special providence becomes impossible. From that instant men will cease their vain efforts to please an imaginary being, and will give their time and attention to the affairs of this world. They will abandon the idea of attaining any object by prayer and supplication. The element of uncertainty will, in a great measure, be removed from the domain of the future, and man, gathering courage from a succession of victories over the obstructions of nature, will attain a serene grandeur unknown to the disciples of any superstition. The plans of mankind will no longer be interfered with by the finger of a supposed omnipotence, and no one will believe that nations or individuals are protected or destroyed by any deity whatever. Science, freed from the chains of pious custom and evangelical prejudice, will, within her sphere, be supreme. The mind will investigate without reverence, and publish its conclusions without fear. Agassiz will no longer hesitate to declare the Mosaic cosmogony utterly inconsistent with the demonstrated truths of geology, and will cease pretending any reverence for the Jewish scriptures. The moment science succeeds in rendering the Church powerless for evil, the real thinkers will be outspoken. The little flags of truce carried by timid philosophers will disappear, and the cowardly parley will give place to victory—lasting and universal.

If we admit that some infinite being has controlled the destinies of persons and peoples, history becomes a most cruel and bloody farce. Age after age the strong have trampled upon the weak; the crafty and heartless have ensnared and enslaved the simple and innocent, and nowhere, in all the annals of mankind, has any god succoured the oppressed.

Man should cease to expect aid from on high. By this time he should know that heaven has no ear to hear, and no hand to help. The present is the necessary child of all the past. There has been no chance, and there can be no interference.

If abuses are destroyed, man must destroy them. If slaves are freed, man must free them. If new truths are discovered, man must discover them. If the naked are clothed; if the hungry are fed; if justice is done; if labour is rewarded; if superstition is driven from the mind; if the defenceless are protected, and if the right finally triumphs, all must be the work of man. The grand victories of the future must be won by man, and by man alone.

Nature, so far as we can discern, without passion, and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms for ever. She neither weeps nor rejoices. She produces man without purpose, and obliterates him without regret. She knows no distinction between the beneficial and the hurtful. Poison and nutrition, pain and joy, life and death, smiles and tears, are alike to her. She is neither merciful nor cruel. She cannot be flattered by worship nor melted by tears. She does not know even the attitude of prayer. She appreciates no difference between poison in the fangs of snakes and mercy in the hearts of men. Only through man does nature take cognisance of the good, the true, and the beautiful; and, so far as we know, man is the highest intelligence.

And yet man continues to believe that there is some power independent of and superior to nature, and still endeavours, by form, ceremony, supplication, hypocrisy, and sacrifice, to obtain its aid. His best energies have been wasted in the service of this phantom. The horrors of witchcraft were all born of an ignorant belief in the existence of a totally depraved being superior to Nature, acting in perfect independence of her laws; and all religious superstition has had for its basis a belief in at least two beings, one good and the other bad, both of whom could arbitrarily change the order of the universe. The history of religion is simply the story of man's efforts in all ages to avoid one of these powers, and to pacify the other. Both powers have inspired little else than

abject fear. The cold, calculating sneer of the devil and the frown of God were equally terrible. In any event, man's fate was to be arbitrarily fixed for ever by an unknown power superior to all law and to all fact. Until this belief is thrown aside, man must consider himself the slave of phantom masters, neither of whom promise liberty in this world nor in the next.

Man must learn to rely upon himself. Reading Bibles will not protect him from the blasts of winter, but houses, fires, and clothing will. To prevent famine, one plough is worth a million sermons, and even patent medicines will cure more diseases than all the prayers uttered since the beginning of the world.

Although many eminent men have endeavoured to harmonise necessity and free will, the existence of evil, and the infinite power and goodness of God, they have succeeded only in producing learned and ingenious failures. Immense efforts have been made to reconcile ideas utterly inconsistent with the facts by which we are surrounded, and all persons who have failed to perceive the pretended reconciliation have been denounced as infidels, atheists, and scoffers. The whole power of the Church has been brought to bear against philosophers and scientists in order to compel a denial of the authority of demonstration, and to induce some Judas to betray Reason, one of the saviours of mankind.

During that frightful period known as the "Dark Ages" Faith reigned, with scarcely a rebellious subject. Her temples were "carpeted with knees," and the wealth of nations adorned her countless shrines. The great painters prostituted their genius to immortalise her vagaries, while the poets enshrined them in song. At her bidding, man covered the earth with blood. The scales of justice were turned with her gold, and for her use were invented all the cunning instruments of pain. She built cathedrals for God and dungeons

for men. She peopled the clouds with angels and the earth with slaves. For centuries the world was retracing its steps—going steadily back towards barbaric night! A few infidels—a few heretics cried "Halt!" to the great rabble of ignorant devotion, and made it possible for the genius of the nineteenth century to revolutionise the cruel creeds and superstitions of mankind.

The thoughts of man, in order to be of any real worth, must be free. Under the influence of fear the brain is paralysed, and, instead of bravely solving a problem for itself, tremblingly adopts the solution of another. As long as a majority of men will cringe to the very earth before some petty prince or king, what must be the infinite abjectness of their little souls in the presence of their supposed creator and God. Under such circumstances what can their thoughts be worth?

The originality of repetition and the mental vigour of acquiescence are all that we have any right to expect from the Christian world. As long as every question is answered by the word "god," scientific inquiry is simply impossible. As fast as phenomena are satisfactorily explained the domain of the power supposed to be superior to nature must decrease, while the horizon of the known must as constantly continue to enlarge.

It is no longer satisfactory to account for the fall and rise of nations by saying, "It is the will of God." Such an explanation puts ignorance and education upon an exact equality, and does away with the idea of really accounting for anything whatever.

Will the religionist pretend that the real end of science is to ascertain how and why God acts? Science, from such a standpoint, would consist in investigating the law of arbitrary action, and in a grand endeavour to ascertain the rules necessarily obeyed by infinite caprice.

From a philosophical point of view, science is knowledge of the laws of life; of the conditions of happiness; of the

facts by which we are surrounded, and the relations we sustain to men and things—by means of which man, so to speak, subjugates nature and bends the elemental powers to his will, making blind force the servant of his brain.

A belief in special providence does away with the spirit of investigation, and is inconsistent with personal effort. Why should man endeavour to thwart the designs of God? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature? Under the influence of this belief, man, basking in the sunshine of a delusion, considers the lilies of the field and refuses to take any thought for the morrow. Believing himself in the power of an infinite being, who can, at any moment, dash him to the lowest hell or raise him to the highest heaven, he necessarily abandons the idea of accomplishing anything by his own efforts. As long as this belief was general, the world was filled with ignorance, superstition, and misery. The energies of man were wasted in a vain effort to obtain the aid of this power, supposed to be superior to nature. For countless ages, even men were sacrificed upon the altar of this impossible god. To please him, mothers have shed the blood of their own babes; martyrs have chanted triumphant songs in the midst of flame; priests have gorged themselves with blood; nuns have forsworn the ecstasies of love; old men have tremblingly implored; women have sobbed and entreated; every pain has been endured, and every horror has been perpetrated.

Through the dim long years that have fled, humanity has suffered more than can be conceived. Most of the misery has been endured by the weak, the loving, and the innocent. Women have been treated like poisonous beasts, and little children trampled upon as though they had been vermin. Numberless altars have been reddened, even with the blood of babes; beautiful girls have been given to slimy serpents; whole races of men doomed to centuries of

slavery, and everywhere there has been outrage beyond the power of genius to express. During all these years the suffering have supplicated; the withered lips of famine have prayed; the pale victims have implored, and heaven has been deaf and blind.

Of what use have the gods been to man?

It is no answer to say that some god created the world, established certain laws, and then turned his attention to other matters, leaving his children weak, ignorant, and unaided, to fight the battle of life alone. It is no solution to declare that in some other world this god will render a few, or even all, his subjects happy. What right have we to expect that a perfectly wise, good, and powerful being will ever do better than he has done, and is doing? The world is filled with imperfections. If it was made by an infinite being, what reason have we for saying that he will render it nearer perfect than it now is? If the infinite "Father" allows a majority of his children to live in ignorance and wretchedness now, what evidence is there that he will ever improve their condition? Will God have more power? Will he become more merciful? Will his love for his poor creatures increase? Can the conduct of infinite wisdom, power, and love ever change? Is the infinite capable of any improvement whatever?

We are informed by the clergy that this world is a kind of school; that the evils by which we are surrounded are for the purpose of developing our souls, and that only by suffering can men become pure, strong, virtuous, and grand.

Supposing this to be true, what is to become of those who die in infancy? The little children, according to this philosophy, can never be developed. They were so unfortunate as to escape the ennobling influences of pain and misery, and, as a consequence, are doomed to an eternity of mental inferiority. If the clergy are right on this

question, none are so unfortunate as the happy, and we should envy only the suffering and distressed. If evil is necessary to the development of man in this life, how is it possible for the soul to improve in the perfect joy of paradise?

Since Paley found his watch, the argument of "design" has been relied upon as unanswerable. The Church teaches that this world, and all that it contains, were created substantially as we now see them; that the grasses, the flowers, the trees, and all animals, including man, were special creations, and that they sustain no necessary relation to each other. The most orthodox will admit that some earth has been washed into the sea; that the sea has encroached a little upon the land, and that some mountains may be a trifle lower than in the morning of creation. The theory of gradual development was unknown to our fathers; the idea of evolution did not occur to them. Our fathers looked upon the then arrangement of things as the primal arrangement. The earth appeared to them fresh from the hands of a deity. They knew nothing of the slow evolutions of countless years, but supposed that the almost infinite variety of vegetable and animal forms had existed from the first.

Suppose that upon some island we should find a man a million years of age, and suppose that we should find him in the possession of a most beautiful carriage, constructed upon the most perfect model. And suppose, further, that he should tell us that it was the result of several hundred thousand years of labour and of thought; and for fifty thousand years he used as flat a log as he could find, before it occurred to him that, by splitting the log, he could have the same surface with only half the weight; that it took him many thousand years to invent wheels for this log; that the wheels he first used were solid, and that fifty thousand years of thought suggested the use of spokes and tyre; that for many centuries he used the wheels without linch-pins; that it took a hundred thousand years more

to think of using four wheels, instead of two; that for ages he walked behind the carriage when going down hill, in order to hold it back, and that only by a lucky chance he invented the tongue; would we conclude that this man, from the very first, had been an infinitely ingenious and perfect mechanic? Suppose we found him living in an elegant mansion, and he should inform us that he lived in that house for five hundred thousand years before he thought of putting on a roof, and that he had but recently invented windows and doors; would we say that from the beginning he had been an infinitely accomplished and scientific architect?

Does not an improvement in the things created show a corresponding improvement in the creator?

Would an infinitely wise, good, and powerful God, intending to produce man, commence with the lowest possible forms of life; with the simplest organism that can be imagined, and, during immeasurable periods of time, slowly and almost imperceptibly improve upon the rude beginning, until man was evolved? Would countless ages thus be wasted in the production of awkward forms, afterwards abandoned? Can the intelligence of man discover the least wisdom in covering the earth with crawling, creeping horrors, that live only upon the agonies and pangs of others? Can we see the propriety of so constructing the earth that only an insignificant portion of its surface is capable of producing an intelligent man? Who can appreciate the mercy of so making the world that all animals devour animals; so that every mouth is a slaughter-house, and every stomach a tomb? Is it possible to discover infinite intelligence and love in universal and eternal carnage?

What would we think of a father who should give a farm to his children, and before giving them possession should plant upon it thousands of deadly shrubs and vines; should stock it with ferocious beasts and poisonous reptiles; should take pains to put a few swamps in the

neighbourhood to breed malaria ; should so arrange matters that the ground would occasionally open and swallow a few of his darlings ; and, besides all this, should establish a few volcanoes in the immediate vicinity, that might at any moment overwhelm his children with rivers of fire ? Suppose that this father neglected to tell his children which of the plants were deadly ; that the reptiles were poisonous ; failed to say anything about the earthquakes, and kept the volcano business a profound secret ; would we pronounce him angel or fiend ?

And yet this is exactly what the orthodox God has done.

According to the theologians, God prepared this globe expressly for the habitation of his loved children, and yet he filled the forests with ferocious beasts ; placed serpents in every path ; stuffed the world with earthquakes, and adorned its surface with mountains of flame.

Notwithstanding all this, we are told that the world is perfect ; that it was created by a perfect being, and it is therefore necessarily perfect. The next moment these same persons will tell us that the world was cursed ; covered with brambles, thistles, and thorns, and that man was doomed to disease and death, simply because our poor, dear mother ate an apple contrary to the command of an arbitrary God.

A very pious friend of mine, having heard that I had said the world was full of imperfections, asked me if the report was true. Upon being informed that it was, he expressed great surprise that anyone could be guilty of such presumption. He said that, in his judgment, it was impossible to point out an imperfection. "Be kind enough," said he, "to name even one improvement that you could make, if you had the power." "Well," said I, "I would make good health catching, instead of disease." The truth is, it is impossible to harmonise all the ills and pains and agonies of this world with the idea that we were created by and are watched over and protected by an infinitely wise, powerful,

and beneficent God, who is superior to and independent of nature.

The clergy, however, balance all the real ills of this life with the expected joys of the next. We are assured that all is perfection in heaven : there the skies are cloudless—there all is serenity and peace. Here empires may be overthrown ; dynasties may be extinguished in blood ; millions of slaves may toil 'neath the fierce rays of the sun and the cruel strokes of the lash ; yet all is happiness in heaven. Pestilences may strew the earth with corpses of the loved ; the survivors may bend above them in agony—yet the placid bosom of heaven is unruffled. Children may expire vainly asking for bread ; babes may be devoured by serpents, while the gods sit smiling in the clouds. The innocent may languish unto death in the obscurity of dungeons ; brave men and heroic women may be changed to ashes at the bigot's stake, while heaven is filled with song and joy. Out on the wide sea, in darkness and in storm, the shipwrecked struggle with the cruel waves while the angels play upon their golden harps. The streets of the world are filled with the diseased, the deformed, and the helpless ; the chambers of pain are crowded with the pale forms of the suffering, while the angels float and fly in the happy realms of day. In heaven they are too happy to have sympathy ; too busy singing to aid the imploring and distressed. Their eyes are blinded ; their ears are stopped, and their hearts are turned to stone by the infinite selfishness of joy. The saved mariner is too happy when he touches the shore to give a moment's thought to his drowning brothers. With the indifference of happiness, with the contempt of bliss, heaven barely glances at the miseries of earth. Cities are devoured by the rushing lava ; the earth opens and thousands perish ; women raise their clasped hands towards heaven, but the gods are too happy to aid their children. The smiles of the deities are unacquainted with the tears of men. The shouts of heaven drown the sobs of earth.

Having shown how man created gods, and how he became the trembling slave of his own creation, the questions naturally arise: How did he free himself even a little from these monarchs of the sky, from these despots of the clouds, from this aristocracy of the air? How did he, even to the extent that he has, outgrow his ignorant, abject terror, and throw off the yoke of superstition?

Probably, the first thing that tended to disabuse his mind was the discovery of order, of regularity, of periodicity in the universe. From this he began to suspect that everything did not happen purely with reference to him. He noticed that, whatever he might do, the motions of the planets were always the same; that eclipses were periodical, and that even comets came at certain intervals. This convinced him that eclipses and comets had nothing to do with him, and that his conduct had nothing to do with them. He perceived that they were not caused for his benefit or injury. He thus learned to regard them with admiration instead of fear. He began to suspect that famine was not sent by some enraged and revengeful deity, but resulted often from the neglect and ignorance of man. He learned that diseases were not produced by evil spirits. He found that sickness was occasioned by natural causes, and could be cured by natural means. He demonstrated, to his own satisfaction at least, that prayer is not a medicine. He found by sad experience that his gods were of no practical use, as they never assisted him, except when he was perfectly able to help himself. At last he began to discover that his individual action had nothing whatever to do with strange appearances in the heavens; that it was impossible for him to be bad enough to cause a whirlwind, or good enough to stop one. After many centuries of thought, he about half concluded that making mouths at a priest would not necessarily cause an earthquake. He noticed, and no doubt with considerable astonishment, that very good men were

occasionally struck by lightning, while very bad ones escaped. He was frequently forced to the painful conclusion (and it is the most painful to which any human being ever was forced) that the right did not always prevail. He noticed that the gods did not interfere in behalf of the weak and innocent. He was now and then astonished by seeing an unbeliever in the enjoyment of most excellent health. He finally ascertained that there could be no possible connection between an unusually severe winter and his failure to give a sheep to a priest. He began to suspect that the order of the universe was not constantly being changed to assist him because he repeated a creed. He observed that some children would steal after having been regularly baptised. He noticed a vast difference between religion and justice, and that the worshippers of the same God took delight in cutting each other's throats. He saw that these religious disputes filled the world with hatred and slavery. At last he had the courage to suspect that no God at any time interferes with the order of events. He learned a few facts, and these facts positively refused to harmonise with the ignorant superstitions of his fathers. Finding his sacred books incorrect and false in some particulars, his faith in their authenticity began to be shaken; finding his priests ignorant upon some points, he began to lose respect for the cloth. This was the commencement of intellectual freedom.

The civilisation of man has increased just to the same extent that religious power has decreased. The intellectual advancement of man depends upon how often he can exchange an old superstition for a new truth. The Church never enabled a human being to make even one of these exchanges; on the contrary, all her power has been used to prevent them. In spite, however, of the Church, man found that some of his religious conceptions were wrong. By reading his Bible, he found that the ideas of his God were more cruel and

brutal than those of the most depraved savage. He also discovered that this holy book was filled with ignorance, and that it must have been written by persons wholly unacquainted with the nature of the phenomena by which we are surrounded; and now and then some man had the goodness and courage to speak his honest thoughts. In every age some thinker, some doubter, some investigator, some hater of hypocrisy, some despiser of sham, some brave lover of the right, has gladly, proudly, and heroically braved the ignorant fury of superstition for the sake of man and truth. These divine men were generally torn in pieces by the worshippers of the gods. Socrates was poisoned because he had lacked reverence for some of the deities. Christ was crucified by a religious rabble for the crime of blasphemy. Nothing is more gratifying to a religionist than to destroy his enemies at the command of God. Religious persecution springs from a due admixture of love towards God and hatred towards man.

The terrible religious wars that inundated the world with blood tended at least to bring all religion into disgrace and hatred. Thoughtful people began to question the divine origin of a religion that made its believers hold the rights of others in absolute contempt. A few began to compare Christianity with the religions of heathen people, and were forced to admit that the difference was hardly worth dying for. They also found that other nations were even happier and more prosperous than their own. They began to suspect that their religion, after all, was not of much real value.

For three hundred years the Christian world endeavoured to rescue from the "infidel" the empty sepulchre of Christ. For three hundred years the armies of the Cross were baffled and beaten by the victorious hosts of an impudent impostor. This immense fact sowed the seeds of distrust throughout all Christendom, and millions began to lose confidence in a God who had been vanquished by

Mohammed. The people also found that commerce made friends where religion made enemies, and that religious zeal was utterly incompatible with peace between nations or individuals. They discovered that those who loved the gods most were apt to love men least; that the arrogance of universal forgiveness was amazing; that the most malicious had the effrontery to pray for their enemies, and that humility and tyranny were the fruit of the same tree.

For ages a deadly conflict has been waged between a few brave men and women of thought and genius upon the one side, and the great ignorant religious mass on the other. This is the war between Science and Faith. The few have appealed to reason, to honour, to law, to freedom, to the known, and to happiness here in this world. The many have appealed to prejudice, to fear, to miracle, to slavery, to the unknown, and to misery hereafter. The few have said, "Think!" The many have said, "Believe!"

The first doubt was the womb and cradle of progress, and from the first doubt man has continued to advance. Men began to investigate, and the Church began to oppose. The astronomer scanned the heavens, while the Church branded his grand forehead with the word "Infidel"; and now not a glittering star in all the vast expanse bears a Christian name. In spite of all religion, the geologist penetrated the Earth, read her history in books of stone, and found, hidden within her bosom, souvenirs of all the ages. Old ideas perished in the retort of the chemist, and useful truths took their places. One by one religious conceptions have been placed in the crucible of science, and thus far nothing but dross has been found. A new world has been discovered by the microscope; everywhere has been found the infinite; in every direction man has investigated and explored, and nowhere, in earth or stars, has been found the footstep of any being superior to or independent of nature. Nowhere has been discovered

the slightest evidence of any interference from without.

These are the sublime truths that enabled man to throw off the yoke of superstition. These are the splendid facts that snatched the sceptre of authority from the hands of priests.

In that vast cemetery, called the past, are most of the religions of men, and there, too, are nearly all their gods. The sacred temples of India were ruins long ago. Over column and cornice, over the painted and pictured walls, cling and creep the trailing vines. Brahma, the golden, with four heads and four arms; Vishnu, the sombre, the punisher of the wicked, with his three eyes, his crescent, and his necklace of skulls; Siva, the destroyer, red with seas of blood; Kali, the goddess; Draupadi, the white-armed, and Chrishna, the Christ, all passed away and left the thrones of heaven desolate. Along the banks of the sacred Nile, Isis no longer wandering weeps, searching for the dead Osiris. The shadow of Typhon's scowl falls no more upon the waves. The sun rises as of yore, and his golden beams still smite the lips of Memnon; but Memnon is as voiceless as the Sphinx. The sacred fanes are lost in desert sands; the dusty mummies are still waiting for the resurrection promised by their priests, and the old beliefs, wrought in curiously sculptured stone, sleep in the mystery of a language lost and dead. Odin, the author of life and soul, Vili and Ve, and the mighty giant Ymir, strode long ago from the icy halls of the North; and Thor, with iron glove and glittering hammer, dashes mountains to the earth no more. Broken are the circles and cromlechs of the ancient Druids; fallen upon the summits of the hills, and covered with the centuries' moss, are the sacred cairns. The divine fires of Persia and of the Aztecs have died out in the ashes of the past, and there is none to rekindle, and none to feed the holy flames. The harp of Orpheus is still; the drained cup of Bacchus has been thrown aside; Venus lies dead in

stone, and her white bosom heaves no more with love. The streams still murmur, but no naiads bathe; the trees still wave, but in the forest aisles no dryads dance. The gods have flown from high Olympus. Not even the beautiful women can lure them back, and Danæ lies unnoticed, naked to the stars. Hushed forever are the thunders of Sinai; lost are the voices of the prophets, and the land once flowing with milk and honey is but a desert waste. One by one the myths have faded from the clouds; one by one the phantom host has disappeared, and one by one facts, truths, and realities have taken their places. The supernatural has almost gone, but the natural remains. The gods have fled, but man is here.

Nations, like individuals, have their periods of youth, of manhood, and decay. Religions are the same. The same inexorable destiny awaits them all. The gods created by the nations must perish with their creators. They were created by men, and, like men, they must pass away. The deities of one age are the by-words of the next. The religion of our day and country is no more exempt from the sneer of the future than the others have been. When India was supreme, Brahma sat upon the world's throne. When the sceptre passed to Egypt, Isis and Osiris received the homage of mankind. Greece, with her fierce valour, swept to empire, and Zeus put on the purple of authority. The earth trembled with the tread of Rome's intrepid sons, and Jove grasped with mail hand the thunderbolts of heaven. Rome fell, and Christians from her territory, with the red sword of war, carved out the ruling nations of the world, and now Christ sits upon the old throne. Who will be his successor?

Day by day religious conceptions grow less and less intense. Day by day the old spirit dies out of book and creed. The burning enthusiasm, the quenchless zeal of the early Church, have gone, never, never to return. The ceremonies remain, but the ancient faith is fading

out of the human heart. The worn-out arguments fail to convince, and the denunciations that once blanched the faces of a race excite in us only derision and disgust. As time rolls on, the miracles grow mean and small, and the evidences our fathers thought conclusive utterly fail to satisfy us. There is an "irrepressible conflict" between religion and science, and they cannot peaceably occupy the same brain nor the same world.

While utterly discarding all creeds, and denying the truth of all religions, there is neither in my heart nor upon my lips a sneer for the hopeful, loving, and tender souls who believe that from all this discord will result a perfect harmony; that every evil will in some mysterious way become a good, and that above and over all there is a being who, in some way, will reclaim and glorify every one of the children of men; but for those who heartlessly try to prove that salvation is almost impossible; that damnation is almost certain; that the highway of the universe leads to hell; who fill life with fear and death with horror; who curse the cradle and mock the tomb, it is impossible to entertain other than feelings of pity, contempt, and scorn.

Reason, Observation, and Experience—the Holy Trinity of Science—have taught us that happiness is the only good; that the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so. This is enough for us. In this belief we are content to live and die. If by any possibility the existence of a power superior to, and independent of, nature shall be demonstrated, there will then be time enough to kneel. Until then let us stand erect.

Notwithstanding the fact that infidels in all ages have battled for the rights of man, and have at all times been the fearless advocates of liberty and justice, we are constantly charged by the Church with tearing down without building again. The Church should by this time know that it is utterly impossible to

rob men of their opinions. The history of religious persecution fully establishes the fact that the mind necessarily resists and defies every attempt to control it by violence. The mind necessarily clings to old ideas until prepared for the new. The moment we comprehend the truth, all erroneous ideas are of necessity cast aside.

A surgeon once called upon a poor cripple and kindly offered to render him any assistance in his power. The surgeon began to discourse very learnedly upon the nature and origin of disease; of the curative properties of certain medicines; of the advantages of exercise, air, and light, and of the various ways in which health and strength could be restored. These remarks were so full of good sense, and discovered so much profound thought and accurate knowledge, that the cripple, becoming thoroughly alarmed, cried out: "Do not, I pray you, take away my crutches. They are my only support, and without them I should be miserable indeed!" "I am not going," said the surgeon, "to take away your crutches. I am going to cure you, and then you will throw the crutches away yourself."

For the vagaries of the clouds the infidels propose to substitute the realities of earth; for superstition, the splendid demonstrations and achievements of science; and for theological tyranny, the chainless liberty of thought.

We do not say that we have discovered all; that our doctrines are the all-in-all of truth. We know of no end to the development of man. We cannot unravel the infinite complications of matter and force. The history of one monad is as unknown as that of the universe; one drop of water is as wonderful as all the seas; one leaf, as all the forests; and one grain of sand, as all the stars.

We are not endeavouring to chain the future, but to free the present. We are not forging fetters for our children, but we are breaking those our fathers made for us. We are the advocates of inquiry, of investigation and thought. This of

itself is an admission that we are not perfectly satisfied with all our conclusions. Philosophy has not the egotism of faith. While superstition builds walls and creates obstructions, science opens all the highways of thought. We do not pretend to have circumnavigated everything, and to have solved all difficulties, but we do believe that it is better to love men than to fear gods; that it is grander and nobler to think and investigate for yourself than to repeat a creed. We are satisfied that there can be but little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven. We do not expect to accomplish everything in our day; but we want to do what good we can, and to render all the service possible in the holy cause of human progress. We know that doing away with gods and supernatural persons and powers is not

an end. It is a means to an end—the real end being the happiness of man.

Felling forests is not the end of agriculture. Driving pirates from the sea is not all there is of commerce.

We are laying the foundations of the grand temple of the future—not the temple of all the gods, but of all the people—wherein, with appropriate rites, will be celebrated the religion of Humanity. We are doing what little we can to hasten the coming of the day when society shall cease producing millionaires and mendicants—gorged indolence and famished industry—truth in rags, and superstition robed and crowned. We are looking for the time when the useful shall be the honourable; and when REASON, throned upon the world's brain, shall be the King of Kings and God of Gods.

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE

SOMEBODY ought to tell the truth about the Bible. The preachers dare not, because they would be driven from their pulpits. Professors in colleges dare not, because they would lose their salaries. Politicians dare not, they would be defeated. Editors dare not, they would lose subscribers. Merchants dare not, because they might lose customers. Men of fashion dare not, fearing that they would lose caste. Even clerks dare not, because they might be discharged. And so, I thought I would do it myself.

There are many millions of people who believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God—millions who think that this book is staff and guide, counsellor and consoler; that it fills the present with peace and the future with hope; millions who believe that it is the fountain of law, justice, and mercy, and that to its wise and benign teachings the world is indebted for its liberty, wealth, and civilisation; millions who imagine that this book is a revelation from the wisdom and love of God to the brain and heart of man; millions who regard this book as a torch that conquers the darkness of death, and pours its radiance on another world—a world without a tear.

They forget its ignorance and savagery, its hatred of liberty, its religious persecution; they remember heaven, but they forget the dungeon of eternal pain.

They forget that it imprisons the brain and corrupts the heart. They forget that it is the enemy of intellectual freedom. Liberty is my religion. Liberty of hand and brain—of thought and labour.

Liberty is a word hated by kings, loathed by popes. It is a word that shatters thrones and altars, that leaves the crowned without subjects, and the outstretched hand of superstition without alms. Liberty is the blossom and fruit

of justice, the perfume of mercy. Liberty is the seed and soil, the air and light, the dew and rain of progress, love, and joy.

I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE.

A few wandering families, poor, wretched, without education, art, or power; descendants of those who had been enslaved for 400 years; ignorant as the inhabitants of Central Africa, had just escaped from their masters to the desert of Sinai.

Their leader was Moses, a man who had been raised in the family of Pharaoh, and had been taught the law and mythology of Egypt. For the purpose of controlling his followers he pretended that he was instructed and assisted by Jehovah, the god of these wanderers.

Everything that happened was attributed to the interference of this god. Moses declared that he met this god face to face; that on Sinai's top from the hands of this god he had received the tables of stone on which, by the finger of this god, the Ten Commandments had been written, and that, in addition to this, Jehovah had made known the sacrifices and ceremonies that were pleasing to him, and the laws by which the people should be governed.

In this way the Jewish religion and the Mosaic Code were established.

It is now claimed that this religion and these laws were and are revealed and established for all mankind.

At that time these wanderers had no commerce with other nations, they had no written language, they could neither read nor write. They had no means by which they could make this revelation known to other nations, and so 'it

remained buried in the jargon of a few ignorant, impoverished, and unknown tribes for more than two thousand years.

Many centuries after Moses, the leader, was dead, many centuries after all his followers had passed away, the Pentateuch was written, the work of many writers, and to give it force and authority it was claimed that Moses was the author.

We now know that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses.

Towns are mentioned that were not in existence when Moses lived.

Money, not coined until centuries after his death, is mentioned.

So, many of the laws were not applicable to wanderers on the desert—laws about agriculture, about the sacrifice of oxen, sheep, and doves, about the weaving of cloth, about ornaments of gold and silver, about the cultivation of land, about harvest, about the threshing of grain, about houses and temples, about cities of refuge, and about many other subjects of no possible application to a few starving wanderers over the sands and rocks.

It is now not only admitted by intelligent and honest theologians that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, but they all admit that no one knows who the authors were, or who wrote any one of these books, or a chapter, or a line. We know that the books were not written in the same generation, that they were not all written by one person, that they are filled with mistakes and contradictions.

It is also admitted that Joshua did not write the book that bears his name, because it refers to events that did not happen until long after his death.

No one knows, or pretends to know, the author of Judges; all we know is that it was written centuries after all the judges had ceased to exist. No one knows the author of Ruth, nor of First and Second Samuel; all we know is that Samuel did not write the books that bear his name. In the 25th chapter of First Samuel is an account of Samuel's

death, and in the 27th chapter is an account of the raising of Samuel by the Witch of Endor.

No one knows the author of First and Second Kings, or First and Second Chronicles; all we know is that these books are of no value.

We know that the Psalms were not written by David. In the Psalms the Captivity is spoken of, and that did not happen until about five hundred years after David slept with his fathers.

We know that Solomon did not write the Proverbs or the Song; that Isaiah was not the author of the book that bears his name; that no one knows the author of Job, Ecclesiastes, or Esther, or of any book in the Old Testament, with the exception of Ezra.

We know that God is not mentioned or in any way referred to in the book of Esther. We know, too, that the book is cruel, absurd, and impossible.

God is not mentioned in the Song of Solomon, the best book in the Old Testament.

And we know that Ecclesiastes was written by an unbeliever.

We know, too, that the Jews themselves had not decided as to what books were inspired—were authentic—until the second century after Christ.

We know that the idea of inspiration was of slow growth, and that the inspiration was determined by those who had certain ends to accomplish.

II.

IS THE OLD TESTAMENT INSPIRED?

If it is, it should be a book that no man—no number of men—could produce.

It should contain the perfection of philosophy.

It should perfectly accord with every fact in nature.

There should be no mistakes in astronomy, geology, or as to any subject or science.

Its morality should be the highest, the purest.

Its laws and regulations for the control of conduct should be just, wise, perfect, and perfectly adapted to the accomplishment of the ends desired.

It should contain nothing calculated to make man cruel, revengeful, vindictive, or infamous.

It should be filled with intelligence, justice, purity, honesty, mercy, and the spirit of liberty.

It should be opposed to strife and war, to slavery and lust, to ignorance, credulity, and superstition.

It should develop the brain and civilise the heart.

It should satisfy the heart and brain of the best and wisest.

It should be true.

Does the Old Testament satisfy this standard?

Is there anything in the Old Testament, in history, in theory, in law, in government, in morality, in science, above and beyond the ideas, the beliefs, the customs, and prejudices of its authors, and the people among whom they lived?

Is there one ray of light from any supernatural source?

The ancient Hebrews believed that this earth was the centre of the universe, and that the sun, moon, and stars were specks in the sky.

With this the Bible agrees.

They thought the earth was flat, with four corners; that the sky, the firmament, was solid—the floor of Jehovah's nouse.

The Bible teaches the same.

They imagined that the sun journeyed about the earth, and that by stopping the sun the day could be lengthened.

The Bible agrees with this.

They believed that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman; that they had been created but a few years before, and that they, the Hebrews, were their direct descendants.

This the Bible teaches.

If anything is, or can be, certain, the writers of the Bible were mistaken about creation, astronomy, geology; about the

causes of phenomena, the origin of evil, and the cause of death.

Now, it must be admitted that, if an Infinite Being is the author of the Bible, he knew all sciences, all facts, and could not have made a mistake.

If, then, there are mistakes, misconceptions, false theories, ignorant myths and blunders in the Bible, it must have been written by finite beings—that is to say, by ignorant and mistaken men.

Nothing can be clearer than this.

For centuries the Church insisted that the Bible was absolutely true; that it contained no mistakes; that the story of creation was true; that its astronomy and geology were in accord with the facts; that the scientists who differed with the Old Testament were infidels and atheists.

Now this has changed. The educated Christians admit that the writers of the Bible were not inspired as to any science. They now say that God, or Jehovah, did not inspire the writers of his book for the purpose of instructing the world about astronomy, geology, or any science. They now admit that the inspired men who wrote the Old Testament knew nothing about any science, and that they wrote about the earth and stars, the sun and moon, in accordance with the general ignorance of the time.

It required many centuries to force the theologians to this admission. Reluctantly, full of malice and hatred, the priests retired from the field, leaving the victory with science.

They took another position:

They declared that the authors, or rather the writers, of the Bible were inspired in spiritual and moral things; that Jehovah wanted to make known to his children his will and his infinite love for his children; that Jehovah, seeing his people wicked, ignorant, and depraved, wished to make them merciful and just, wise and spiritual, and that the Bible is inspired in its laws, in the religion it teaches, and in its ideas of government.

This is the issue now. Is the Bible any nearer right in its ideas of justice, of mercy, of morality, or of religion than in its conception of the sciences?

Is it moral?

It upholds slavery, it sanctions polygamy.

Could a devil have done worse?

Is it merciful?

In war it raised the black flag; it commanded the destruction, the massacre, of all—of the old, infirm, and helpless—of wives and babes.

Were its laws inspired?

Hundreds of offences were punished with death. To pick up sticks on Sunday, to murder your father on Monday, were equal crimes. There is in the literature of the world no bloodier code. The law of revenge, of retaliation, was the law of Jehovah. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a limb for a limb.

This is savagery, not philosophy.

Is it just and reasonable?

The Bible is opposed to religious toleration, to religious liberty. Whoever differed with the majority was stoned to death. Investigation was a crime. Husbands were ordered to denounce and to assist in killing their unbelieving wives.

It is the enemy of Art. "Thou shalt make no graven image." This was the death of Art.

Palestine never produced a painter or a sculptor.

Is the Bible civilised?

It upholds lying, larceny, robbery, murder, the selling of diseased meat to strangers, and even the sacrifice of human beings to Jehovah.

Is it philosophical?

It teaches that the sins of a people can be transferred to an animal—to a goat. It makes maternity an offence, for which a sin offering had to be made.

It was wicked to give birth to a boy, and twice as wicked to give birth to a girl.

To make hair-oil like that used by the priests was an offence punishable with death.

The blood of a bird killed over running water was regarded as medicine.

Would a civilised God daub his altars with the blood of oxen, lambs, and doves? Would he make all his priests butchers? Would he delight in the smell of burning flesh?

III.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Some Christian lawyers, some eminent and stupid judges, have said, and still say, that the Ten Commandments are the foundation of all law.

Nothing could be more absurd. Long before these Commandments were given there were codes of laws in India and Egypt—laws against murder, perjury, larceny, adultery, and fraud. Such laws are as old as human society, as old as the love of life, as old as industry, as the idea of prosperity, as old as human love.

All of the Ten Commandments that are good were old; all that were new are foolish. If Jehovah had been civilised, he would have left out the commandment about keeping the Sabbath, and in its place would have said: "Thou shalt not enslave thy fellow-men." He would have omitted the one about swearing, and said: "The man shall have but one wife, and the woman but one husband." He would have left out the one about graven images, and in its stead would have said: "Thou shalt not wage wars of extermination, and thou shalt not unsheathe the sword except in self-defence."

If Jehovah had been civilised, how much grander the Ten Commandments would have been.

All that we call progress, the enfranchisement of man, of labour, the substitution of imprisonment for death, of fine for imprisonment, the destruction of polygamy, the establishing of free speech, of the rights of conscience; in short, all that has tended to the development and civilisation of man; all the results of investigation, observation, experience, and free thought; all that

man has accomplished for the benefit of man since the close of the Dark Ages—has been done in spite of the Old Testament.

Let me further illustrate the morality, the mercy, the philosophy and goodness of the Old Testament :

THE STORY OF ACHAN.

Joshua took the City of Jericho. Before the fall of the city he declared that all the spoil taken should be given to the Lord.

In spite of this order Achan secreted a garment, some silver and gold.

Afterwards Joshua tried to take the city of Ai. He failed, and many of his soldiers were slain. Joshua sought for the cause of his defeat, and he found that Achan had secreted a garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold. To this Achan confessed.

And thereupon Joshua took Achan, his sons and his daughters, his oxen and his sheep, stoned them all to death, and burned their bodies.

There is nothing to show that the sons and daughters had committed any crime. Certainly, the oxen and sheep should not have been stoned to death for the crime of their owner. This was the justice, the mercy, of Jehovah !

After Joshua had committed this crime, with the help of Jehovah he captured the city of Ai.

THE STORY OF ELISHA.

“ And he went up thence unto Bethel, and as he was going up by the way there came forth little children out of the city and mocked him, and said unto him, ‘ Go up, thou baldhead.’

“ And he turned back and looked at them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she-bears out of the wood and tore forty and two children of them.”

This was the work of the good God—the merciful Jehovah !

THE STORY OF DANIEL.

King Darius had honoured and

exalted Daniel, and the native princes were jealous. So they induced the King to sign a decree to the effect that any man who should make a petition to any god or man except to King Darius, for thirty days, should be cast into the den of lions.

Afterwards these men found that Daniel, with his face towards Jerusalem, prayed three times a day to Jehovah.

Thereupon Daniel was cast into the den of lions ; a stone was placed at the mouth of the den and sealed with the King's seal.

The King passed a bad night. The next morning he went to the den and cried out to Daniel. Daniel answered, and told the King that God had sent his angels and shut the mouths of the lions.

Daniel was taken out alive and well, and the King was converted and believed in Daniel's god.

Darius, being then a believer in the true God, sent for the men who had accused Daniel, and for their wives and their children, and cast them all into the lions' den.

“ And the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the pit.”

What had the wives and little children done? How had they offended King Darius, the believer in Jehovah? Who protected Daniel? Jehovah ! Who failed to protect the innocent wives and children? Jehovah !

THE STORY OF JOSEPH.

Pharaoh had a dream, and this dream was interpreted by Joseph.

According to this interpretation, there were to be in Egypt seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. Joseph advised Pharaoh to buy all the surplus of the seven plentiful years and store it up against the years of famine.

Pharaoh appointed Joseph as his minister or agent, and ordered him to buy the grain of the plentiful years.

Then came the famine. The people

came to the King for help. He told them to go to Joseph and do as he said.

Joseph sold corn to the Egyptians until all their money was gone—until he had it all.

When the money was gone the people said: "Give us corn, and we will give you our cattle."

Joseph let them have corn until all their cattle, their horses, and their flocks had been given to him.

Then the people said: "Give us corn, and we will give you our lands."

So Joseph let them have corn until all their lands were gone.

But the famine continued, and so the poor wretches sold themselves, and they became the servants of Pharaoh.

Then Joseph gave them seed, and made an agreement with them that they should forever give one-fifth of all they raised to Pharaoh.

Who enabled Joseph to interpret the dream of Pharaoh? Jehovah! Did he know at the time that Joseph would use the information thus given to rob and enslave the people of Egypt? Yes. Who produced the famine? Jehovah!

It is perfectly apparent that the Jews did not think of Jehovah as the God of Egypt—the God of all the world. He was their God, and theirs alone. Other nations had gods, but Jehovah was the greatest of all. He hated other nations and other gods, and abhorred all religions except the worship of himself.

IV.

WHAT IS IT ALL WORTH?

Will some Christian scholar tell us the value of Genesis?

We know that it is not true—that it contradicts itself. There are two accounts of the creation in the first and second chapters. In the first account birds and beasts were created before man.

In the second, man was created before the birds and beasts.

In the first, fowls are made out of the water.

In the second, fowls are made out of the ground.

In the first, Adam and Eve are created together.

In the second, Adam is made, then the beasts and birds, and then Eve is created from one of Adam's ribs.

These stories are far older than the Pentateuch.

Persian: God created the world in six days, a man called Adama, a woman called Evah, and then rested.

The Etruscan, Babylonian, Phoenician, Chaldean, and the Egyptian stories are much the same.

The Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Chinese, and Hindus have their Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life.

So the Persians, the Babylonians, the Nubians, the people of Southern India, all had the story of the Fall of Man and the subtle serpent.

The Chinese say that sin came into the world by the disobedience of woman. And even the Tahitians tell us that man was created from the earth, and the first woman from one of his bones.

All these stories are equally authentic and of equal value to the world, and all the authors were equally inspired.

We know also that the story of the Flood is much older than the book of Genesis, and we know besides that it is not true.

We know that this story in Genesis was copied from the Chaldean. There you find all about the rain, the ark, the animals, the dove that was sent out three times, and the mountain on which the ark rested.

So the Hindus, Chinese, Parsees, Persians, Greeks, Mexicans, and Scandinavians have substantially the same story.

We also know that the account of the Tower of Babel is an ignorant and childish fable.

What, then, is left in this inspired book of Genesis? Is there a word calculated to develop the heart or brain? Is there an elevated thought, any great principle, anything poetic, any word that bursts into blossom?

Is there anything except a dreary and detailed statement of things that never happened?

Is there anything in Exodus calculated to make men generous, loving, and noble?

Is it well to teach children that God tortured the innocent cattle of the Egyptians, bruised them to death with hailstones, on account of the sins of Pharaoh?

Does it make us merciful to believe that God killed the firstborn of the Egyptians, the firstborn of the poor and suffering people, of the poor girl working at the mill, because of the wickedness of the King?

Can we believe that the gods of Egypt worked miracles? Did they change water into blood and sticks into serpents?

In Exodus there is not one original thought or line of value.

We know, if we know anything, that this book was written by savages—savages who believed in slavery, polygamy, and wars of extermination. We know that the story told is impossible, and that the miracles were never performed. This book admits that there are other gods besides Jehovah. In the 17th chapter is this verse: "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them."

So, in this blessed book is taught the duty of human sacrifice—the sacrifice of babes.

In the 22nd chapter is this command: "Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt give unto me."

Has Exodus been a help or a hindrance to the human race?

Take from Exodus the laws common to all nations, and is there anything of value left?

Is there anything in Leviticus of importance? Is there a chapter worth reading? What interest have we in the clothes of priests, the curtains and candles of the tabernacle, the tongs and

shovels of the altar, or the hair-oil used by the Levites?

Of what use the cruel code, the frightful punishments, the curses, the falsehoods, and the miracles of the ignorant and infamous book?

And what is there in the book of Numbers, with its sacrifices and water of jealousy, with its shewbread and spoons, its kids and fine flour, its oil and candlesticks, its cucumbers, onions, and manna, to assist and instruct mankind? What interest have we in the rebellion of Korah, the water of separation, the ashes of a red heifer, the brazen serpent, the water that followed the people uphill and down for forty years, and the inspired donkey of the prophet Balaam? Have these absurdities and cruelties, these childish, savage superstitions, helped to civilise the world?

Is there anything in Joshua, with its wars, its murders and massacres, its swords dripping with the blood of mothers and babes, its tortures, maimings, and mutilations, its fraud and fury, its hatred and revenge, calculated to improve the world?

Does not every chapter shock the heart of a good man? Is it a book to be read by children?

The book of Joshua is as merciless as famine, as ferocious as the heart of a wild beast. It is a history, a justification, a sanctification of nearly every crime.

The book of Judges is about the same, nothing but war and bloodshed; the horrible story of Jael and Sisera, of Gideon and his trumpets and pitchers, of Jephthah and his daughter whom he murdered to please Jehovah.

Here we find the story of Samson, in which a sun-god is changed to a Hebrew giant.

Read this book of Joshua, read of the slaughter of women, of wives, of mothers and babes, read its impossible miracles, its ruthless crimes, and all done according to the commands of Jehovah, and tell me whether this book is calculated to make us forgiving, generous, and loving.

I admit that the history of Ruth is in some respects a beautiful and touching story, that it is naturally told, and that her love for Naomi was deep and pure. But in the matter of courtship we would hardly advise our daughters to follow the example of Ruth. Still, we must remember that Ruth was a widow.

Is there anything worth reading in the first and second books of Samuel? Ought a prophet of God to hew a captured king in pieces? Is the story of the ark, its capture and return, of importance to us? Is it possible that it was right, just, and merciful to kill fifty thousand men because they had looked into a box? Of what use to us are the wars of Saul and David, the stories of Goliath and the Witch of Endor? Why should Jehovah have killed Uzzah for putting forth his hand to steady the ark, and forgiven David for murdering Uriah and stealing his wife?

According to "Samuel," David took a census of the people. This excited the wrath of Jehovah, and as a punishment he allowed David to choose seven years of famine, a flight of three months from pursuing enemies, or three days of pestilence. David, having confidence in God, chose the three days of pestilence; and thereupon God, the compassionate, on account of the sin of David, killed seventy thousand innocent men!

Under the same circumstances, what would a devil have done?

Is there anything in First and Second Kings that suggests the idea of inspiration?

When David is dying he tells his son Solomon to murder Joab, not to let his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. With his last breath he commands his son to bring down the hoar head of Shimei to the grave with blood. Having uttered these merciful words, the good David, the man after God's heart, slept with his fathers.

Was it necessary to inspire the man who wrote the history of the building of the temple, the story of the visit of the

Queen of Sheba, or to tell the number of Solomon's wives?

What care we for the withering of Jeroboam's hand, the prophecy of Jehu, or the story of Elijah and the ravens?

Can we believe that Elijah brought flames from heaven, or that he went at last to Paradise in a chariot of fire?

Can we believe in the multiplication of the widow's oil by Elisha, that an army was smitten with blindness, or that an axe floated in the water?

Does it civilise us to read about the beheading of the seventy sons of Ahab, the putting out of the eyes of Zedekiah and the murder of his sons? Is there one word in First and Second Kings calculated to make men better?

First and Second Chronicles is but a re-telling of what is told in First and Second Kings. The same old stories, a little left out, a little added, but in no respect made better or worse.

The book of Ezra is of no importance. He tells us that Cyrus, King of Persia, issued a proclamation for building a temple at Jerusalem, and that he declared Jehovah to be the real and only God.

Nothing could be more absurd. Ezra tells us about the return from captivity, the building of the temple, the dedication, a few prayers, and this is all. This book is of no importance, of no use.

Nehemiah is about the same, only it tells of the building of the wall, the complaints of the people about taxes, a list of those who returned from Babylon, a catalogue of those who dwelt at Jerusalem, and the dedication of the walls.

Not a word in Nehemiah worth reading.

Then comes the book of Esther:

In this we are told that King Ahasuerus was intoxicated; that he sent for his Queen, Vashti, to come and show herself to him and his guests. Vashti refused to appear.

This maddened the King, and he ordered that from every province the most beautiful girls should be brought before him that he might choose one in place of Vashti.

Among others was brought Esther, a Jewess. She was chosen and became the wife of the King. Then a gentleman by the name of Haman wanted to have all the Jews killed, and the King, not knowing that Esther was of that race, signed a decree that all the Jews should be killed.

Through the efforts of Mordecai and Esther the decree was annulled and the Jews were saved.

Haman prepared a gallows on which to have Mordecai hanged, but the good Esther so managed matters that Haman and his ten sons were hanged on the gallows that Haman had built, and the Jews were allowed to murder more than seventy-five thousand of the King's subjects.

This is the inspired story of Esther.

In the book of Job we find some elevated sentiments, some sublime and foolish thoughts, something of the wonder and sublimity of nature, the joys and sorrows of life; but the story is infamous.

Some of the Psalms are good, many are indifferent, and a few are infamous. In them are mingled the vices and virtues. There are verses that elevate, verses that degrade. There are prayers for forgiveness and revenge. In the literature of the world there is nothing more heartless, more infamous, than the 109th Psalm.

In the Proverbs there is much shrewdness, many pithy and prudent maxims, many wise sayings. The same ideas are expressed in many ways—the wisdom of economy and silence, the dangers of vanity and idleness. Some are trivial, some are foolish, and many are wise. These proverbs are not generous, not altruistic. Sayings to the same effect are found among all nations.

Ecclesiastes is the most thoughtful book in the Bible. It was written by an unbeliever, a philosopher, an agnostic. Take out the interpolations, and it is in accordance with the thought of the nineteenth century. In this book are found the most philosophic and poetic passages in the Bible.

After crossing the desert of death and crime, after reading the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, it is delightful to reach this grove of palms, called the "Song of Solomon." A drama of love—of human love; a poem without Jehovah—a poem born of the heart and true to the divine instincts of the soul.

"I sleep, but my heart waketh."

Isaiah is the work of several. Its swollen words, its vague imagery, its prophecies and curses, its ravings against kings and nations, its laughter at the wisdom of man, its hatred of joy, have not the slightest tendency to increase the well-being of man.

In this book is recorded the absurdest of all miracles. The shadow on the dial is turned back ten degrees, in order to satisfy Hezekiah that Jehovah will add fifteen years to his life.

In this miracle the world, turning from west to east at the rate of more than a thousand miles an hour, is not only stopped, but made to turn the other way until the shadow on the dial went back ten degrees! Is there in the whole world an intelligent man or woman who believes this impossible falsehood?

Jeremiah contains nothing of importance, no facts of value; nothing but faultfinding, lamentations, croakings, wailings, curses, and promises; nothing but famine and prayer, the prosperity of the wicked, the ruin of the Jews, the captivity and return, and at last Jeremiah, the traitor, in the stocks and in prison.

And Lamentations is simply a continuance of the ravings of the same insane pessimist; nothing but dust and sackcloth and ashes, tears and howls, railings and revilings.

And Ezekiel, eating manuscripts, prophesying siege and desolation, with visions of coals of fire, and cherubim, and wheels with eyes, and the type and figure of the boiling pot, and the resurrection of dry bones, is of no use, of no possible value.

With Voltaire, I say that anyone who

admires Ezekiel should be compelled to dine with him.

Daniel is a disordered dream—a nightmare.

What can be made of this book with its image with a golden head, with breast and arms of silver, with belly and thighs of brass, with legs of iron, and with feet of iron and clay; with its writing on the wall, its den of lions, and its vision of the ram and goat?

Is there anything to be learned from Hosea and his wife? Is there anything of use in Joel, in Amos, in Obadiah? Can we get any good from Jonah and his gourd? Is it possible that God is the real author of Micah and Nahum, of Habakkuk and Zephaniah, of Haggai and Malachi, and Zechariah, with his red horses, his four horns, his four carpenters, his flying roll, his mountains of brass, and the stone with four eyes?

Is there anything in these “inspired” books that has been of benefit to man?

Have they taught us how to cultivate the earth, to build houses, to weave cloth, to prepare food? Have they taught us to paint pictures, to chisel statues, to build bridges, or ships, or anything of beauty or of use? Did we get our ideas of government, of religious freedom, of the liberty of thought, from the Old Testament? Did we get from any of these books a hint of any science? Is there in the “sacred volume” a word, a line, that has added to the wealth, the intelligence, and the happiness of mankind? Is there one of the books of the Old Testament as entertaining as *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Travels of Gulliver*, or *Peter Wilkins and his Flying Wife*? Did the author of Genesis know as much about nature as Humboldt, or Darwin, or Haeckel? Is what is called the Mosaic Code as wise or as merciful as the code of any civilised nation? Were the writers of Kings and Chronicles as great historians, as great writers, as Gibbon and Draper? Is Jeremiah or Habakkuk equal to Dickens or Thackeray? Can the authors of Job

and the Psalms be compared with Shakespeare? Why should we attribute the best to man and the worst to God?

V.

WAS JEHOVAH A GOD OF LOVE?

Did these words come from the heart of love?—

“When the Lord thy God shall drive them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, or show mercy unto them.”

“I will heap mischief upon them. I will send mine arrows upon them; they shall be burned with hunger and devoured with burning heat and with bitter destruction.”

“I will send the tooth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.”

“The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin; the suckling also with the man of gray hairs.”

“Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow; let his children be continually vagabonds and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places; let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labour; let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.”

“And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body—the flesh of thy sons and daughters.”

“And the heaven that is over thee shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.”

“Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.”

“I will make my arrows drunk with blood.”

“I will laugh at their calamity.”

Did these curses, these threats, come from the heart of love or from the mouth of savagery?

Was Jehovah god or devil?

Why should we place Jehovah above all the gods?

Has man in his ignorance and fear ever imagined a gréater monster?

Have the barbarians of any land, in any time, worshipped a more heartless god?

Brahma was a thousand times nobler, and so were Osiris and Zeus and Jupiter. So was the supreme god of the Aztecs, to whom they offered only the perfume of flowers. The worst god of the Hindus, with his necklace of skulls and his bracelets of living snakes, was kind and merciful compared with Jehovah.

Compared with Marcus Aurelius, how small Jehovah seems. Compared with Abraham Lincoln, how cruel, how contemptible, is this god.

VI.

JEHOVAH'S ADMINISTRATION.

He created the world, the hosts of heaven, a man and woman, placed them in a garden. Then the serpent deceived them, and they were cast out and made to earn their bread.

Jehovah had been thwarted.

Then he tried again. He went on for about sixteen hundred years trying to civilise the people.

No schools, no churches, no Bible, no tracts, nobody taught to read or write. No Ten Commandments. The people grew worse and worse, until the merciful Jehovah sent the flood and drowned all the people except Noah and his family, eight in all.

Then he started again, and changed their diet. At first Adam and Eve were vegetarians. After the flood Jehovah said: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you"—snakes and buzzards.

Then he failed again, and at the Tower of Babel he dispersed and scattered the people.

Finding that he could not succeed with all the people, he thought he would try a few, so he selected Abraham and his descendants. Again he failed, and his chosen people were captured by the Egyptians and enslaved for four hundred years.

Then he tried again—rescued them from Pharaoh, and started for Palestine.

Again he changed their diet, allowing them to eat only the beasts that parted the hoof and chewed the cud. Again he failed. The people hated him, and preferred the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of Jehovah. So he kept them wandering until nearly all who came from Egypt had died. Then he tried again—took them into Palestine and had them governed by judges.

This, too, was a failure—no schools, no Bible. Then he tried kings, and the kings were mostly idolaters.

Then the chosen people were conquered and carried into captivity by the Babylonians.

Another failure.

Then they returned, and Jehovah tried prophets—howlers and wailers—but the people grew worse and worse. No schools, no sciences, no arts, no commerce. Then Jehovah took upon himself flesh, was born of a woman, and lived among the people that he had been trying to civilise for several thousand years. Then these people, following the law that Jehovah had given them in the wilderness, charged this Jehovah-man—this Christ—with blasphemy, tried, convicted, and killed him.

Jehovah had failed again.

Then he deserted the Jews and turned his attention to the rest of the world.

And now the Jews, deserted by Jehovah, persecuted by Christians, are the most prosperous people on the earth. Again has Jehovah failed.

What an administration!

VII.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Who wrote the New Testament?

Christian scholars admit that they do not know. They admit that, if the four Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they must have been written in Hebrew. And yet a Hebrew manuscript of any one of these Gospels has never been found. All have been

and are in Greek. So, educated theologians admit that the Epistles, James and Jude, were written by persons who had never seen one of the four Gospels. In these Epistles—in James and Jude—no reference is made to any of the Gospels, nor to any miracle recorded in them.

The first mention that has been found of one of our Gospels was made about one hundred and eighty years after the birth of Christ, and the four Gospels were first named and quoted from at the beginning of the third century, about one hundred and seventy years after the death of Christ.

We now know that there were many other Gospels besides our four, some of which have been lost. There were the Gospels of Paul, of the Egyptians, of the Hebrews, of Perfection, of Judas, of Thaddeus, of the Infancy, of Thomas, of Mary, of Andrew, of Nicodemus, of Marcion, and several others.

So there were the Acts of Pilate, of Andrew, of Mary, of Paul and Thecla, and of many others. Another book was called the Shepherd of Hermes.

At first not one of all the books was considered as inspired. The Old Testament was regarded as divine; but the books that now constitute the New Testament were regarded as human productions. We now know that we do not know who wrote the four Gospels.

The question is, Were the authors of these four Gospels inspired?

If they were inspired, then the four Gospels must be true. If they are true, they must agree.

The four Gospels do not agree.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke knew nothing of the atonement, nothing of salvation by faith. They knew only the gospel of good deeds, of charity. They teach that if we forgive others God will forgive us.

With this the Gospel of John does not agree.

In that Gospel we are taught that we must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; that we must be born again; that we

must drink the blood and eat the flesh of Christ. In this Gospel we find the doctrine of the Atonement, and that Christ died for us and suffered in our place.

This Gospel is utterly at variance with the other three. If the other three are true, the Gospel of John is false. If the Gospel of John was written by an inspired man, the writers of the other three were uninspired. From this there is no possible escape. The four cannot be true.

It is evident that there are many interpolations in the four Gospels.

For instance, in the 28th chapter of Matthew is an account to the effect that the soldiers at the tomb of Christ were bribed to say that the disciples of Jesus stole away his body while they, the soldiers, slept.

This is clearly an interpolation. It is a break in the narrative.

The 10th verse should be followed by the 16th. The 10th verse is as follows:

"Then Jesus said unto them, 'Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go unto Galilee, and there shall they see me.'"

The 16th verse:

"Then the eleven disciples went away unto Galilee into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them."

The story about the soldiers contained in the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th verses is an interpolation—an afterthought—long after. The 15th verse demonstrates this.

Fifteenth verse: "So they took the money and did as they were taught. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

Certainly, this account was not in the original Gospel, and certainly the 15th verse was not written by a Jew. No Jew could have written this: "And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

Mark, John, and Luke never heard that the soldiers had been bribed by the priests, or, if they had, did not think it worth while recording. So the accounts of the Ascension of Jesus Christ in Mark

and Luke are interpolations. Matthew says nothing about the Ascension.

Certainly there never was a greater miracle, and yet Matthew, who was present, who saw the Lord rise, ascend, and disappear, did not think it worth mentioning.

On the other hand, the last words of Christ, according to Matthew, contradict the Ascension: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

John, who was present, if Christ really ascended, says not one word on the subject.

As to the Ascension, the Gospels do not agree.

Mark gives the last conversation that Christ had with his disciples, as follows:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God."

Is it possible that this description was written by one who witnessed this miracle?

This miracle is described by Luke as follows: "And it came to pass while he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into heaven."

"Brevity is the soul of wit."

In the Acts we are told that "When he had spoken, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Neither Luke, nor Matthew, nor John, nor the writer of the Acts, heard one word of the conversation attributed to Christ by Mark. The fact is that the Ascension of Christ was not claimed by his disciples.

At first Christ was a man, nothing more. Mary was his mother, Joseph his

father. The genealogy of his father, Joseph, was given to show that he was of the blood of David.

Then the claim was made that he was the son of God, and that his mother was a virgin, and that she remained a virgin until her death.

Then the claim was made that Christ rose from the dead and ascended bodily to heaven.

It required many years for these absurdities to take possession of the minds of men.

If Christ rose from the dead, why did he not appear to his enemies? Why did he not call on Caiaphas, the high priest? Why did he not make another triumphal entry into Jerusalem?

If he really ascended, why did he not do so in public, in the presence of his persecutors? Why should this, the greatest of miracles, be done in secret in a corner?

It was a miracle that could have been seen by a vast multitude—a miracle that could not be simulated—one that would have convinced hundreds of thousands.

After the story of the Resurrection, the Ascension became a necessity. They had to dispose of the body.

So there are many other interpolations in the Gospels and Epistles.

Again I ask: Is the New Testament true? Does anybody now believe that at the birth of Christ there was a celestial greeting; that a star led the Wise Men of the East; that Herod slew the babes of Bethlehem of two years old and under?

The Gospels are filled with accounts of miracles. Were they ever performed?

Matthew gives the particulars of about twenty-two miracles, Mark of about nineteen, Luke of about eighteen, and John of about seven.

According to the Gospels, Christ healed diseases, cast out devils, rebuked the sea, cured the blind, fed multitudes with five loaves and two fishes, walked on the sea, cursed a fig tree, turned water into wine, and raised the dead.

Matthew is the only one that tells about the Star and the Wise Men, the

only one that tells about the murder of babes.

John is the only one who says anything about the resurrection of Lazarus, and Luke is the only one giving an account of the raising from the dead the widow of Nain's son.

How is it possible to substantiate these miracles?

The Jews, among whom they were said to have been performed, did not believe them. The diseased, the palsied, the leprous, the blind who were cured, did not become followers of Christ. Those that were raised from the dead were never heard of again.

Does any intelligent man believe in the existence of devils? The writers of three of the Gospels certainly did. John says nothing about Christ having cast out devils, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke give many instances.

Does any natural man now believe that Christ cast out devils? If his disciples said he did, they were mistaken. If Christ said he did, he was insane or an impostor.

If the accounts of casting out devils are false, then the writers were ignorant or dishonest. If they wrote through ignorance, then they were not inspired. If they wrote what they knew to be false, they were not inspired. If what they wrote is untrue, whether they knew it or not, they were not inspired.

At that time it was believed that palsy, epilepsy, deafness, insanity, and many other diseases, were caused by devils; that devils took possession of and lived in the bodies of men and women. Christ believed this, taught this belief to others, and pretended to cure diseases by casting devils out of the sick and insane. We now know, if we know anything, that diseases are not caused by the presence of devils. We know, if we know anything, that devils do not reside in the bodies of men.

If Christ said and did what the writers of the three Gospels say he said and did, then Christ was mistaken. If he was mistaken, certainly he was not God.

And, if he was mistaken, certainly he was not inspired.

Is it a fact that the devil tried to bribe Christ?

Is it a fact that the devil carried Christ to the top of the temple and tried to induce him to leap to the ground?

How can these miracles be established?

The principals have written nothing, Christ has written nothing, and the devil has remained silent.

How can we know that the devil tried to bribe Christ? Who wrote the account? We do not know. How did the writer get his information? We do not know.

Somebody, some seventeen hundred years ago, said that the devil tried to bribe God; that the devil carried God to the top of the temple, and tried to induce him to leap to the earth, and that God was intellectually too keen for the devil.

This is all the evidence we have.

Is there anything in the literature of the world more perfectly idiotic?

Intelligent people no longer believe in witches, wizards, spooks, and devils, and they are perfectly satisfied that every word in the New Testament about casting out devils is utterly false.

Can we believe that Christ raised the dead?

A widow living in Nain is following the body of her son to the tomb. Christ halts the funeral procession and raises the young man from the dead, and gives him back to the arms of his mother.

This young man disappears. He is never heard of again. No one takes the slightest interest in the man who returned from the realm of death. Luke is the only one who tells the story. Maybe Matthew, Mark, and John never heard of it, or did not believe it, and so failed to record it.

John says that Lazarus was raised from the dead; Matthew, Mark, and Luke say nothing about it.

It was more wonderful than the raising of the widow's son. He had not been laid in the tomb for days. He was only on his way to the grave, but Lazarus

was actually dead. He had begun to decay.

Lazarus did not excite the least interest. No one asked him about the other world. No one inquired of him about their dead friends.

When he died the second time no one said: "He is not afraid. He has travelled that road twice and knows just where he is going."

We do not believe in the miracles of Mohammed, and yet they are as well attested as this. We have no confidence in the miracles performed by Joseph Smith, and yet the evidence is far greater, far better.

If a man should go about now pretending to raise the dead, pretending to cast out devils, we would regard him as insane. What, then, can we say of Christ? If we wish to save his reputation, we are compelled to say that he never pretended to raise the dead, that he never claimed to have cast out devils.

We must take the ground that these ignorant and impossible things were invented by zealous disciples, who sought to deify their leader.

In those ignorant days these falsehoods added to the fame of Christ; but now they put his character in peril and belittle the authors of the Gospels.

Can we now believe that water was changed into wine? John tells of this childish miracle, and says that the other disciples were present; yet Matthew, Mark, and Luke say nothing about it.

Take the miracle of the man cured by the pool of Bethesda. John says that an angel troubled the waters of the pool of Bethesda, and that whoever got into the pool first after the waters were troubled was healed.

Does anybody now believe that an angel went into the pool and troubled the waters? Does anybody now think that the poor wretch who got in first was healed? Yet the author of the Gospel according to John believed and asserted these absurdities. If he was mistaken about that, he may have been about all the miracles he records.

John is the only one who tells about this pool of Bethesda. Possibly the other disciples did not believe the story.

How can we account for these pretended miracles?

In the days of the disciples, and for many centuries after, the world was filled with the supernatural. Nearly everything that happened was regarded as miraculous. God was the immediate governor of the world. If the people were good, God sent seed time and harvest; but if they were bad, he sent flood and hail, frost and famine. If anything wonderful happened, it was exaggerated until it became a miracle.

Of the order of events—of the unbroken and the unbreakable chain of causes and effects—the people had no knowledge and no thought.

A miracle is the badge and brand of fraud. No miracle ever was performed. No intelligent, honest man ever pretended to perform a miracle, and never will.

If Christ had wrought the miracles attributed to him, if he had cured the palsied and insane, if he had given hearing to the deaf, vision to the blind, if he had cleansed the leper with a word, and with a touch had given life and feeling to the withered limb, if he had given pulse and motion, warmth and thought, to cold and breathless clay, if he had conquered death and rescued from the grave its pallid prey, no word would have been uttered, no hand raised, except in praise and honour. In his presence all heads would have been uncovered, all knees upon the ground.

Is it not strange that at the trial of Christ no one was found to say a word in his favour? No man stood forth and said: "I was a leper, and this man cured me with a touch." No woman said: "I am the widow of Nain, and this is my son whom this man raised from the dead."

No man said: "I was blind, and this man gave me sight."

All silent.

VIII.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRIST.

Millions assert that the philosophy of Christ is perfect, that he was the wisest that ever uttered speech.

Let us see :

Resist not evil. If smitten on one cheek, turn the other.

Is there any philosophy, any wisdom in this? Christ takes from goodness, from virtue, from the truth, the right of self-defence. Vice becomes the master of the world, and the good become the victim of the infamous.

No man has the right to protect himself, his property, his wife and children. Government becomes impossible, and the world is at the mercy of criminals. Is there any absurdity beyond this?

Love your enemies.

Is this possible? Did any human being ever love his enemies? Did Christ love his when he denounced them as whited sepulchres, hypocrites, and vipers?

We cannot love those who hate us. Hatred in the hearts of others does not breed love in ours. Not to resist evil is absurd; to love your enemies is impossible.

Take no thought for the morrow.

The idea was that God would take care of us, as he did of sparrows and lilies. Is there the least sense in that belief?

Does God take care of anybody?

Can we live without taking thought for the morrow? To plough, to sow, to cultivate, to harvest, is to take thought for the morrow. We plan and work for the future, for our children, for the unborn generations to come. Without this forethought there could be no progress, no civilisation. The world would go back to the caves and dens of savagery.

If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out. If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.

Why? Because it is better that one of our members should perish than that the whole body should be cast into hell.

Is there any wisdom in putting out

your eyes or cutting off your hands? Is it possible to extract from these extravagant sayings the smallest grain of common sense?

Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is his holy city.

Here we find the astronomy and geology of Christ. Heaven is the throne of God, the monarch; the earth is his footstool. A footstool that turns over at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, and sweeps through space at the rate of over a thousand miles a minute!

Where did Christ think heaven was? Why was Jerusalem a holy city? Was it because the inhabitants were ignorant, cruel, and superstitious?

If a man sue thee at law and take away your coat, give him your cloak also.

Is there any philosophy, any good sense, in that commandment? Would it not be just as sensible to say: "If a man obtains a judgment against you for one hundred dollars, give him two hundred."

Only the insane could give or follow this advice.

Think not I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother.

If this is true, how much better it would have been had he remained away.

Is it possible that he who said, "Resist not evil," came to bring a sword? That he who said, "Love your enemies," came to destroy the peace of the world?

To set father against son, and daughter against mother, what a glorious mission!

He did bring a sword, and the sword was wet for a thousand years with innocent blood. In millions of hearts he sowed the seeds of hatred and revenge. He divided nations and families, put out the light of reason, and petrified the hearts of men.

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my

name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

According to the writer of Matthew, Christ, the compassionate, the merciful, uttered these terrible words. Is it possible that Christ offered the bribe of eternal joy to those who would desert their fathers, their mothers, their wives and children? Are we to win the happiness of heaven by deserting the ones we love? Is a home to be ruined here for the sake of a mansion there?

And yet it is said that Christ is an example for all the world. Did he desert his father and mother? He said, speaking to his mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

The Pharisees said unto Christ: "Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar?"

Christ said: "Show me the tribute money." They brought him a penny. And he saith unto them: "Whose is the image and the superscription?" They said: "Cæsar's." And Christ said: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

Did Christ think that the money belonged to Cæsar because his image and superscription were stamped upon it? Did the penny belong to Cæsar or to the man who had earned it? Had Cæsar the right to demand it because it was adorned with his image?

Does it appear from this conversation that Christ understood the real nature and use of money?

Can we now say that Christ was the greatest of philosophers?

IX.

IS CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE?

He never said a word in favour of education. He never even hinted at the existence of any science. He never uttered a word in favour of industry, economy, or of any effort to better our condition in this world. He was the enemy of the successful, of the wealthy. Dives was sent to hell, not because he was bad, but because he was rich. Lazarus went to heaven, not because he was good, but because he was poor.

Christ cared nothing for painting, for sculpture, for music—nothing for any art. He said nothing about the duties of nation to nation, of king to subject; nothing about the rights of man, nothing about intellectual liberty or the freedom of speech. He said nothing about the sacredness of home, not one word for the fireside, not a word in favour of marriage, in honour of maternity.

He never married. He wandered homeless from place to place with a few disciples. None of them seem to have been engaged in any useful business, and they seem to have lived on alms.

All human ties were held in contempt; this world was sacrificed for the next; all human effort was discouraged. God would support and protect.

At last, in the dusk of death, Christ, finding that he was mistaken, cried out: "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"

We have found that man must depend on himself. He must clear the land, he must build the home, he must plough and plant, he must invent, he must work with hand and brain, he must overcome the difficulties and obstructions, he must conquer and enslave the forces of nature to the end that they may do the work of the world.

X.

WHY SHOULD WE PLACE CHRIST AT THE TOP AND SUMMIT OF THE HUMAN RACE?

Was he kinder, more forgiving, more self-sacrificing, than Buddha? Was he wiser, did he meet death with more perfect calmness, than Socrates? Was he more patient, more charitable, than Epictetus? Was he a greater philosopher, a deeper thinker, than Epicurus? In what respect was he the superior of Zoroaster? Was he gentler than Laotse, more universal than Confucius? Were his ideas of human rights and duties superior to those of Zeno? Did he express grander truths than Cicero? Was his mind subtler than Spinoza's? Was his brain equal to Kepler's or Newton's? Was he grander in death, a

sublimar martyr than Bruno? Was he in intelligence, in the force and beauty of expression, in breadth and scope of thought, in wealth of illustration, in aptness of comparison, in knowledge of the human brain and heart, of all passions, hopes, and fears, the equal of Shakespeare, the greatest of the human race?

If Christ was in fact God, he knew all the future. Before him like a panorama moved the history yet to be. He knew how his words would be interpreted. He knew what crimes, what horrors, what infamies, would be committed in his name. He knew that the hungry flames of persecution would climb around the limbs of countless martyrs. He knew that thousands and thousands of brave men and women would languish in dungeons in darkness, filled with pain. He knew that his Church would invent and use instruments of torture, that his followers would appeal to whip and faggot, to chain and rack. He saw the horizon of the future lurid with the flames of the *auto da fé*. He knew that creeds would spring like poisonous fungi from every text. He saw the ignorant sects waging war against each other. He saw thousands of men, under the orders of priests, building prisons for their fellow-men. He saw thousands of scaffolds dripping with the best and bravest blood. He saw his followers using the instruments of pain. He heard the groans, saw the faces white with agony. He heard the shrieks and sobs and cries of all the moaning, martyred multitudes. He knew that commentaries would be written on his words with swords, to be read by the light of faggots. He knew that the Inquisition would be born of the teachings attributed to him.

He saw the interpolations and falsehoods that hypocrisy would write and tell. He saw all wars that would be waged, and he knew that above these fields of death, these dungeons, these rackings, these burnings, these executions, for a thousand years would float the dripping banner of the Cross.

He knew that hypocrisy would be robed and crowned, that cruelty and credulity would rule the world; knew that liberty would perish from the earth; knew that popes and kings in his name would enslave the souls and bodies of men; knew that they would persecute and destroy the discoverers, thinkers, and inventors; knew that his Church would extinguish Reason's holy light and leave the world without a star.

He saw his disciples extinguishing the eyes of men, flaying them alive, cutting out their tongues, searching for all the nerves of pain.

He knew that in his name his followers would trade in human flesh, that cradles would be robbed and women's breasts unbabed for gold.

And yet he died with voiceless lips.

Why did he fail to speak? Why did he not tell his disciples, and through them the world: "You shall not burn, imprison, and torture in my name. You shall not persecute your fellow-men"?

Why did he not plainly say: "I am the Son of God," or "I am God"? Why did he not explain the Trinity? Why did he not tell the mode of baptism that was pleasing to him? Why did he not write a creed? Why did he not break the chains of slaves? Why did he not say that the Old Testament was or was not the inspired word of God? Why did he not write the New Testament himself? Why did he leave his words to ignorance, hypocrisy, and chance? Why did he not say something positive, definite, and satisfactory about another world? Why did he not turn the tear-stained hope of heaven into the glad knowledge of another life? Why did he not tell us something of the rights of man, of the liberty of hand and brain?

Why did he go dumbly to his death, leaving the world to misery and to doubt?

I will tell you why. He was a man, and did not know.

XI.

INSPIRATION.

Not before about the third century was it claimed or believed that the books composing the New Testament were inspired.

It will be remembered that there were a great number of books, of Gospels, Epistles, and Acts, and that from these the "inspired" ones were selected by "uninspired" men.

Between the "Fathers" there were great differences of opinion as to which books were inspired, much discussion, and plenty of hatred. Many of the books now deemed spurious were by many of the "Fathers" regarded as divine, and some now regarded as inspired were believed to be spurious. Many of the early Christians and some of the "Fathers" repudiated the Gospel of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, Jude, James, Peter, and the Revelation of St. John. On the other hand, many of them regarded the Gospel of the Hebrews, of the Egyptians, the Preaching of Peter, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Pastor of Hermas, the Revelation of Peter, the Revelation of Paul, the Epistle of Clement, the Gospel of Nicodemus, inspired books, equal to the very best.

From all these books, and many others, the Christians selected the inspired ones.

The men who did the selecting were ignorant and superstitious. They were firm believers in the miraculous. They thought that diseases had been cured by the aprons and handkerchiefs of the Apostles, by the bones of the dead. They believed in the fable of the Phoenix, and that the hyenas changed their sex every year.

Were the men who through many centuries made the selections inspired? Were they—ignorant, credulous, stupid, and malicious—as well qualified to judge of "inspiration" as the students of our time? How are we bound by their opinion? Have we not the right to judge for ourselves?

Erasmus, one of the leaders of the Reformation, declared that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by Paul, and he denied the inspiration of Second and Third John, and also of Revelation. Luther was of the same opinion. He declared James to be an epistle of straw, and denied the inspiration of Revelation. Zwinglius rejected the book of Revelation, and even Calvin denied that Paul was the author of Hebrews.

The truth is that the Protestants did not agree as to what books are inspired until 1647, by the Assembly of Westminster.

To prove that a book is inspired you must prove the existence of God. You must also prove that this God thinks, acts, has objects, ends, and aims. This is somewhat difficult.

It is impossible to conceive of an infinite being. Having no conception of an infinite being, it is impossible to tell whether all the facts we know tend to prove or disprove the existence of such a being.

God is a guess. If the existence of God is admitted, how are we to prove that he inspired the writers of the books of the Bible?

How can one man establish the inspiration of another? How can an inspired man prove that he is inspired? How can he know himself that he is inspired? There is no way to prove the fact of inspiration. The only evidence is the word of some man who could by no possibility know anything on the subject.

What is inspiration? Did God use men as instruments? Did he cause them to write his thoughts? Did he take possession of their minds and destroy their wills?

Were these writers only partly controlled, so that their mistakes, their ignorance, and their prejudices were mingled with the wisdom of God?

How are we to separate the mistakes of man from the thoughts of God? Can we do this without being inspired ourselves? If the original writers were inspired, then the translators should have

been, and so should be the men who tell us what the Bible means.

How is it possible for a human being to know that he is inspired by an infinite being? But of one thing we may be certain: An inspired book should certainly excel all the books produced by uninspired men. It should, above all, be true, filled with wisdom, blossoming in beauty—perfect.

Ministers wonder how I can be wicked enough to attack the Bible.

I will tell them.

This book, the Bible, has persecuted, even unto death, the wisest and the best. This book stayed and stopped the onward movement of the human race. This book poisoned the fountains of learning and misdirected the energies of man.

This book is the enemy of freedom, the support of slavery. This book sowed the seeds of hatred in families and nations, fed the flames of war, and impoverished the world. This book is the breastwork of kings and tyrants, the enslaver of women and children. This book has corrupted Parliaments and Courts. This book has made colleges and universities the teachers of error and the haters of science. This book has filled Christendom with hateful, cruel, ignorant, and warring sects. This book taught men to kill their fellows for religion's sake. This book founded the Inquisition, invented the instruments of torture, built the dungeons in which the good and loving languished, forged the chains that rusted in their flesh, erected the scaffolds whereon they died. This book piled faggots about the feet of the just. This book drove reason from the minds of millions, and filled the asylums with the insane.

This book has caused fathers and mothers to shed the blood of their babes. This book was the auction block on which the slave-mother stood when she was sold from her child. This book filled the sails of the slave trader and made merchandise of human flesh. This

book lighted the fires that burned "witches" and "wizards." This book filled the darkness with ghouls and ghosts, and the bodies of men and women with devils. This book polluted the souls of men with the infamous dogma of eternal pain. This book made credulity the greatest of virtues and investigation the greatest of crimes. This book filled nations with hermits, monks, and nuns, with the pious and the useless. This book placed the ignorant and unclean saint above the philosopher and philanthropist. This book taught man to despise the joys of this life, that he might be happy in another—to waste this world for the sake of the next.

I attack this book because it is the enemy of human liberty, the greatest obstruction across the highway of human progress.

Let me ask the ministers one question: How can you be wicked enough to defend this book?

XII.

THE REAL BIBLE.

For thousands of years men have been writing the real Bible, and it is being written from day to day, and it will never be finished while man has life. All the facts that we know, all the truly recorded events, all the discoveries and inventions, all the wonderful machines whose wheels and levers seem to think, all the poems, crystals from the brain, flowers from the heart, all the songs of love and joy, of smiles and tears, the great dramas of Imagination's world, the wondrous paintings, miracles of form and colour, of light and shade, the marvellous marbles that seem to live and breathe, the secrets told by rock and star, by dust and flower, by rain and snow, by frost and flame, by winding stream and desert sand, by mountain range and billowed sea.

All the wisdom that lengthens and ennobles life, all that avoids or cures disease or conquers pain, all just and perfect laws and rules that guide and

shape our lives, all thoughts that feed the flames of love, the music that transfigures, enraptures, and enthralls, the victories of heart and brain, the miracles that hands have wrought, the deft and cunning hands of those who worked for wife and child, the histories of noble deeds, of brave and useful men, of faithful loving wives, of quenchless mother-

love, of conflicts for the right, of sufferings for the truth, of all the best that all the men and women of the world have said, and thought, and done, through all the years.

These treasures of the heart and brain, these are the Sacred Scriptures of the human race.

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

I.

THE whole world has been filled with fear. Ignorance has been the refuge of the soul. For thousands of years the intellectual ocean was ravaged by the buccaneers of reason. Pious souls clung to the shore and looked at the lighthouse. The seas were filled with monsters and the islands with sirens. The people were driven in the middle of a narrow road while priests went before, beating the hedges on either side to frighten the robbers from their lairs. The poor followers, seeing no robbers, thanked their brave leaders with all their hearts.

Huddled in folds, they listened with wide eyes while the shepherds told of ravening wolves. With great gladness they exchanged their fleeces for security. Shorn and shivering, they had the happiness of seeing their protectors comfortable and warm.

Through all the years those who ploughed divided with those who prayed. Wicked industry supported pious idleness, the hut gave to the cathedral, and frightened poverty gave even its rags to buy a robe for hypocrisy.

Fear is the dungeon of the mind, and superstition is a dagger with which hypocrisy assassinates the soul. Courage is liberty. I am in favour of absolute freedom of thought. In the realm of mind everyone is monarch; everyone is robed, sceptred, and crowned, and everyone wears the purple of authority. I belong to the republic of intellectual liberty, and only those are good citizens of that republic who depend upon reason and upon persuasion, and only those are traitors who resort to brute force.

Now, I beg of you all to forget just for a few moments that you are Metho-

dists or Baptists or Catholics or Presbyterians, and let us for an hour or two remember only that we are men and women. And allow me to say "man" and "woman" are the highest titles that can be bestowed upon humanity.

Let us, if possible, banish all fear from the mind. Do not imagine that there is some being in the infinite expanse who is not willing that every man and woman should think for himself and herself. Do not imagine that there is any being who would give to his children the holy torch of reason, and then damn them for following that sacred light. Let us have courage.

Priests have invented a crime called "blasphemy," and behind that crime hypocrisy has crouched for thousands of years. There is but one blasphemy, and that is injustice. There is but one worship, and that is justice.

You need not fear the anger of a god that you cannot injure. Rather fear to injure your fellow-men. Do not be afraid of a crime you cannot commit. Rather be afraid of the one that you may commit. The reason that you cannot injure God is that the Infinite is conditionless. You cannot increase or diminish the happiness of any being without changing that being's condition. If God is conditionless, you can neither injure nor benefit him.

There was a Jewish gentleman went into a restaurant to get his dinner, and the devil of temptation whispered in his ear: "Eat some bacon." He knew if there was anything in the universe calculated to excite the wrath of an infinite being, who made every shining star, it was to see a gentleman eating bacon. He knew it, and he knew the infinite being was looking, that he was the eternal eavesdropper of the universe. But his

appetite got the better of his conscience, as it often has with us all, and he ate that bacon. He knew it was wrong, and his conscience felt the blood of shame in its cheek. When he went into the restaurant the weather was delightful, the sky was as blue as June, and when he came out the sky was covered with angry clouds, the lightning leaping from one to the other, and the earth shaking beneath the voice of the thunder. He went back into that restaurant with a face as white as milk, and he said to one of the keepers:—

“My God, did you ever hear such a fuss about a little piece of bacon?”

As long as we harbour such opinions of infinity; as long as we imagine the heavens to be filled with such tyranny, just so long the sons of men will be cringing, intellectual cowards. Let us think, and let us honestly express our thought.

Do not imagine for a moment that I think people who disagree with me are bad people. I admit, and I cheerfully admit, that a very large proportion of mankind, and a very large majority, a vast number, are reasonably honest. I believe that most Christians believe what they teach; that most ministers are endeavouring to make this world better. I do not pretend to be better than they are. It is an intellectual question. It is a question, first, of intellectual liberty, and, after that, a question to be settled at the bar of human reason. I do not pretend to be better than they are. Probably I am a good deal worse than many of them, but that is not the question. The question is: “Bad as I am, have I the right to think?” And I think I have for two reasons.

First, I cannot help it. And, secondly, I like it.

The whole question is right at a point. If I have not a right to express my thoughts, who has?

“Oh,” they say, “we will allow you to think; we will not burn you.”

“All right; why won’t you burn me?”

“Because we think a decent man will

allow others to think and to express his thought.”

“Then the reason you do not persecute me for my thought is that you believe it would be infamous in you?”

“Yes.”

“And yet you worship a God who will, as you declare, punish me forever?”

Surely an infinite God ought to be as just as man. Surely no God can have the right to punish his children for being honest. He should not reward hypocrisy with heaven, and punish candour with eternal pain.

The next question, then, is: Can I commit a sin against God by thinking? If God did not intend I should think, why did he give me a thinker? For one, I am convinced, not only that I have the right to think, but that it is my duty to express my honest thoughts. Whatever the gods may say, we must be true to ourselves.

We have got what they call the Christian system of religion, and thousands of people wonder how I can be wicked enough to attack that system.

There are many good things about it, and I shall never attack anything that I believe to be good. I shall never fear to attack anything I honestly believe to be wrong. We have what they call the Christian religion, and I find, just in proportion that nations have been religious, just in the proportion they have clung to the religion of their founders, they have gone back to barbarism. I find that Spain, Portugal, Italy, are the three worst nations in Europe. I find that the nation nearest infidel is the most prosperous—France.

And so I say there can be no danger in the exercise of absolute intellectual freedom. I find among ourselves the men who think are at least as good as those who do not.

We have, I say, a Christian system, and that system is founded upon what they are pleased to call the “New Testament.” Who wrote the New Testament? I do not know. Who does know? Nobody. We have found many manuscripts

containing portions of the New Testament. Some of these manuscripts leave out five or six books—many of them. Others more; others less. No two of these manuscripts agree. Nobody knows who wrote these manuscripts. They are all written in Greek. The disciples of Christ, so far as we know, knew only Hebrew. Nobody ever saw, so far as we know, one of the original Hebrew manuscripts. Nobody ever saw anybody who had seen anybody who had heard of anybody that had ever seen anybody that had ever seen one of the original Hebrew manuscripts. No doubt the clergy of your city have told you these facts thousands of times, and they will be obliged to me for having repeated them once more. These manuscripts are written in what are called capital Greek letters. They are called Uncial manuscripts, and the New Testament was not divided into chapters and verses even until the year of grace 1551. In the original the manuscripts and Gospels are signed by nobody. The Epistles are addressed to nobody; and they are signed by the same person. All the addresses, all the pretended ear-marks showing to whom they were written, and by whom they were written, are simply interpolations, and everybody who has studied the subject knows it.

It is further admitted than even these manuscripts have not been properly translated, and they have a syndicate now making a new translation; and I suppose that I cannot tell whether I really believe the New Testament or not until I see that new translation.

You must remember, also, one other thing. Christ never wrote a solitary word of the New Testament—not one word. There is an account that he once stooped and wrote something in the sand, but that has not been preserved. He never told anybody to write a word. He never said: "Matthew, remember this. Mark, do not forget to put that down. Luke, be sure that in your Gospel you have this. John, do not forget it." Not one word. And it has

always seemed to me that a Being coming from another world, with a message of infinite importance to mankind, should at least have verified that message by his own signature. Is it not wonderful that not one word was written by Christ? Is it not strange that he gave no orders to have his words preserved—words upon which hung the salvation of a world?

Why was nothing written? I will tell you. In my judgment they expected the end of the world in a few days. That generation was not to pass away until the heavens should be rolled up as a scroll, and until the earth should melt with fervent heat. That was their belief. They believed that the world was to be destroyed, and that there was to be another coming, and that the saints were then to govern the earth. And they even went so far among the Apostles, as we frequently do now before election, as to divide out the offices in advance. This Testament, as it now is, was not written for hundreds of years after the Apostles were dust. Many of the pretended facts lived in the open mouth of credulity. They were in the waste-baskets, of forgetfulness. They depended upon the inaccuracy of legend, and for centuries these doctrines and stories were blown about by the inconstant winds. And when reduced to writing, some gentleman would write by the side of the passage his idea of it, and the next copyist would put that in as a part of the text. And, when it was mostly written, and the Church got into trouble, and wanted a passage to help it out, one was interpolated to order. So that now it is among the easiest things in the world to pick out at least one hundred interpolations in the Testament. And I will pick some of them out before I get through.

And let me say here, once for all, that for the man Christ I have infinite respect. Let me say, once for all, that the place where man has died for man is holy ground. And let me say, once for all, that to that great and serene man I gladly pay the tribute of my

admiration and my tears. He was a reformer in his day. He was an infidel in his time. He was regarded as a blasphemer, and his life was destroyed by hypocrites, who have, in all ages, done what they could to trample freedom and manhood out of the human mind. Had I lived at that time, I would have been his friend, and should he come again he will not find a better friend than I will be.

That is for the man. For the theological creation I have a different feeling. If he was, in fact, God, he knew there was no such thing as death. He knew that what we called death was but the eternal opening of the golden gates of everlasting joy; and it took no heroism to face a death that was eternal life.

But when a man, when a poor boy sixteen years of age, goes upon the field of battle to keep his flag upon heaven, not knowing but that death ends all; not knowing but that, when the shadows creep over him, the darkness will be eternal, there is heroism. For the man who, in the darkness, said: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—for that man I have nothing but respect, admiration, and love. Back of the theological shreds, rags, and patches, hiding the real Christ, I see a genuine man.

A while ago I made up my mind to find out what was necessary for me to do in order to be saved. If I have got a soul, I want it saved. I do not wish to lose anything that is of value.

For thousands of years the world has been asking that question:—

"What must we do to be saved?"

Saved from poverty? No. Saved from crime? No. Tyranny? No. But "What must we do to be saved from the eternal wrath of the God who made us all?"

If God made us, he will not destroy us. Infinite wisdom never made a poor investment. Upon all the works of an infinite God a dividend must finally be declared. Why should God make failures? Why should he waste material? Why should he not correct his mistakes,

instead of damning them? The pulpit has cast a shadow over even the cradle. The doctrine of endless punishment has covered the cheeks of this world with tears. I despise it, and I defy it.

I made up my mind, I say, to see what I had to do in order to save my soul according to the Testament, and thereupon I read it. I read the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and found that the Church had been deceiving me. I found that the clergy did not understand their own book; that they had been building upon passages that had been interpolated, upon passages that were entirely untrue; and I will tell you why I think so.

II.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

According to the Church, the first Gospel was written by Matthew. As a matter of fact, he never wrote a word of it—never saw it, never heard of it, and probably never will. But for the purposes of this lecture I admit that he wrote it. I will admit that he was with Christ for three years; that he was his constant companion; that he shared his sorrows and his triumphs; that he heard his words by the lonely lakes, the barren hills, in synagogue and street, and that he knew his heart and became acquainted with his thoughts and aims.

Now let us see what Matthew says we must do in order to be saved. And I take it that, if this is true, Matthew is as good authority as any minister in the world.

The first thing I find upon the subject of salvation is in the fifth chapter of Matthew, and is embraced in what is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount. It is as follows:—

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Good!

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Good! Whether they belonged to any Church or not? Whether they believed the Bible or not?

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Good!

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Good!

In the same sermon he says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." And then he makes use of this remarkable language, almost as applicable to-day as it was then: "For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Good!

In the sixth chapter I find the following, and it comes directly after the prayer known as the Lord's Prayer:—

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

I accept the condition. There is an offer; I accept it. If you will forgive men that trespass against you, God will forgive your trespasses against him. I accept the terms, and I never will ask any God to treat me better than I treat my fellow-men. There is a square promise. There is a contract. If you will forgive others, God will forgive you. And it does not say you must believe in the Old Testament, or be baptised, or join the Church, or keep Sunday; that you must count beads, or pray, or become a nun, or a priest; that you must preach sermons or hear them, build churches or fill them. Not one word is said about eating or fasting, denying or believing. It simply says, if you forgive others, God will forgive you; and it must of necessity be true. No god could afford to damn a forgiving man. Suppose God should damn to everlasting fire a man so great and good that he, looking from the abyss of hell, would forgive God—how would a god feel then?

Now, let me make myself plain upon one subject, perfectly plain. For instance, I hate Presbyterianism, but I know hundreds of splendid Presbyterians. Understand me. I hate Methodism, and yet I know hundreds of splendid Methodists. I hate Catholicism, and like Catholics. I hate insanity, but not the insane.

I do not war against men. I do not war against persons. I war against certain doctrines that I believe to be wrong. But I give to every other human being every right that I claim for myself.

The next thing that I find is in the seventh chapter and the second verse: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Good! That suits me!

And in the twelfth chapter of Matthew: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in Heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother. For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according —." To the Church he belongs to? No. To the manner in which he was baptised? No. According to his creed? No. "Then he shall reward every man according to his works." Good! I subscribe to that doctrine.

And in the eighteenth chapter: "And Jesus called a little child to him and stood him in the midst; and said: 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.'" I do not wonder that in his day, surrounded by scribes and Pharisees, he turned lovingly to little children.

And yet, see what children the little children of God have been. What an interesting dimpled darling John Calvin was. Think of that prattling babe, Jonathan Edwards! Think of the infants that founded the Inquisition, that invented instruments of torture to tear human flesh. They were the ones who had become as little children. They were the children of faith.

So I find in the nineteenth chapter: "And behold, one came and said unto him: 'Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' And he said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' He saith unto him, 'Which?'"

Now, there is a fair issue. Here is a child of God asking God what is necessary for him to do in order to inherit eternal life. And God said to him: "Keep the commandments." And the child said to the Almighty: "Which?" Now, if there ever has been an opportunity given to the Almighty to furnish a man of an inquiring mind with the necessary information upon that subject, here was the opportunity. "He said unto him, 'Which?' And Jesus said: 'Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honour thy father and mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'"

He did not say to him: "You must believe in me—that I am the only begotten son of the living God." He did not say: "You must be born again." He did not say: "You must believe the Bible." He did not say: "You must remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." He simply said: "Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And thereupon the young man, who I think was mistaken, said unto him: "All these things have I kept from my youth up."

What right has the Church to add conditions of salvation? Why should we suppose that Christ failed to tell the young man all that was necessary for him to do? Is it possible that he left out some important thing simply to mislead? Will some minister tell us why he thinks that Christ kept back the "scheme"?

Now comes an interpolation.

In the old times, when the Church got a little scarce of money, they always put in a passage praising poverty. So they had this young man ask: "What lack I yet? And Jesus said unto him: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven.'"

The Church has always been willing to swap off treasures in heaven for cash down. And when the next verse was written, the Church must have been nearly bankrupt. "And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Did you ever know a wealthy disciple to unload on account of that verse?

And then comes another verse, which I believe is an interpolation: "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Christ never said it. Never. "Who-soever shall forsake father and mother."

Why, he said to this man that asked him, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" among other things, he said: "Honour thy father and thy mother." And we turn over the page, and he says again: "If you will desert your father and mother, you shall have everlasting life." It will not do. If you will desert your wife and your little children, or your lands—the idea of putting a house and lot on equality with wife and children! Think of that! I do not accept the terms. I will never desert the one I love for the promise of any god.

It is far more important to love your wife than to love God, and I will tell you why. You cannot help him, but you can help her. You can fill her life with the perfume of perpetual joy. It is far more important that you love your children than that you love Jesus Christ. And why? If he is God, you cannot

help him, but you can plant a little flower of happiness in every footstep of the child, from the cradle until you die in that child's arms. Let me tell you to-day it is far more important to build a home than to erect a church. The holiest temple beneath the stars is a home that love has built. And the holiest altar in all the wide world is the fireside around which gather father and mother and the sweet babes.

There was a time when people believed the infamy commanded in this frightful passage. There was a time when they did desert fathers and mothers and wives and children. St. Augustine says to the devotee: Fly to the desert, and, though your wife put her arms around your neck, tear her hands away; she is a temptation of the devil. Though your father and mother throw their bodies athwart your threshold, step over them; and though your children pursue, and with weeping eyes beseech you to return, listen not. It is the temptation of the evil one. Fly to the desert and save your soul. Think of such a soul being worth saving. While I live I propose to stand by the ones I love.

There is another condition of salvation. I find it in the twenty-fifth chapter: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Good!

I tell you to-night that God will not punish with eternal thirst the man who has put the cup of cold water to the lips of his neighbour. God will not leave in the eternal nakedness of pain the man who has clothed his fellow-men.

For instance, here is a shipwreck, and here is some brave sailor who stands aside and allows a woman whom he never

saw before to take his place in the boat, and he stands there, grand and serene as the wide sea, and he goes down. Do you tell me that there is any God who will push the lifeboat from the shore of eternal life when that man wishes to step in? Do you tell me that God can be un pitying to the pitiful, that he can be unforgiving to the forgiving? I deny it; and from the aspersions of the pulpit I seek to rescue the reputation of the Deity.

Now, I have read you substantially everything in Matthew on the subject of salvation. That is all there is. Not one word about believing anything. It is the gospel of deed, the gospel of charity, the gospel of self-denial; and, if only that gospel had been preached, persecution never would have shed one drop of blood. Not one.

According to the testimony, Matthew was well acquainted with Christ. According to the testimony, he had been with him, and his companion for years, and if it was necessary to believe anything in order to get to Heaven, Matthew should have told us. But he forgot it, or he did not believe it, or he never heard of it. You can take your choice.

In Matthew, we find that Heaven is promised, first, to the poor in spirit. Second, to the merciful. Third, to the pure in heart. Fourth, to the peace-makers. Fifth, to those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. Sixth, to those who keep and teach the commandments. Seventh, to those who forgive men that trespass against them. Eighth, that we will be judged as we judge others. Ninth, that they who receive prophets and righteous men shall receive a prophet's reward. Tenth, to those who do the will of God. Eleventh, that every man shall be rewarded according to his works. Twelfth, to those who become as little children. Thirteenth, to those who forgive the trespasses of others. Fourteenth, to the perfect: they who sell all that they have and give to the poor. Fifteenth, to them who forsake houses,

and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and lands for the sake of Christ's name. Sixteenth, to those who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter to the stranger, clothes to the naked, comfort to the sick, and who visit the prisoner.

Nothing else is said with regard to salvation in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Not one word about believing the Old Testament to have been inspired; not one word about being baptised or joining a Church; not one word about believing in any miracle; not even a hint that it was necessary to believe that Christ was the son of God, or that he did any wonderful or miraculous things, or that he was born of a virgin, or that his coming had been foretold by the Jewish prophets. Not one word about believing in the trinity, or in foreordination or predestination. Matthew had not understood from Christ that any such things were necessary to ensure the salvation of the soul.

According to the testimony, Matthew had been in the company of Christ, some say three years and some say one; but, at least, he had been with him long enough to find out some of his ideas upon this great subject. And yet Matthew never got the impression that it was necessary to believe something in order to get to Heaven. He supposed that, if a man forgave others, God would forgive him; he believed that God would show mercy to the merciful; that he would not allow those who fed the hungry to starve; that he would not put in the flames of hell those who had given cold water to the thirsty; that he would not cast into the eternal dungeon of his wrath those who had visited the imprisoned; and that he would not damn men who forgave others.

Matthew had it in his mind that God would treat us very much as we treated other people; and that in the next world he would treat with kindness those who had been loving and gentle in their lives. It may be the Apostle was mistaken; but evidently that was his opinion.

III.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

Let us now see what Mark thought it necessary for a man to do to save his soul. In the fourth chapter, after Jesus had given to the multitude by the sea the parable of the sower, his disciples, when they were again alone, asked him the meaning of the parable. Jesus replied:—

“Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.

“That seeing, they may see, and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.”

It is a little hard to understand why he should have preached to people that he did not intend should know his meaning. Neither is it quite clear why he objected to their being converted. This, I suppose, is one of the mysteries that we should simply believe without endeavouring to comprehend.

With the above exception; and one other that I will mention hereafter, Mark substantially agrees with Matthew, and says that God will be merciful to the merciful, that he will be kind to the kind, that he will pity the pitying, and love the loving. Mark upholds the religion of Matthew until we come to the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the sixteenth chapter; and then I strike an interpolation put in by hypocrisy, put in by priests, who longed to grasp with bloody hands the sceptre of universal power. Let me read it to you. It is the most infamous passage in the Bible. Christ never said it. No sensible man ever said it.

“And He said unto them” (that is, unto his disciples), “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

That passage was written so that fear

would give alms to hypocrisy. Now, I propose to prove to you that this is an interpolation. How will I do it? In the first place, not one word is said about belief in Matthew. In the next place, not one word about belief in Mark until I come to that verse, and where is that said to have been spoken? According to Mark, it is a part of the last conversation of Jesus Christ—just before, according to the account, he ascended bodily before their eyes. If there ever was any important thing happened in this world, that was it. If there is any conversation that people would be apt to recollect, it would be the last conversation with a god before he rose visibly though the air and seated himself upon the throne of the infinite. We have in this Testament five accounts of the last conversation happening between Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Matthew gives it, and yet Matthew does not state that in that conversation Christ said: "Whoso believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and whoso believeth not shall be damned." And if he did say those words, they were the most important that ever fell from lips. Matthew did not hear it, or did not believe it, or forgot it.

Then I turn to Luke, and he gives an account of this same last conversation, and not one word does he say upon that subject. Luke does not pretend that Christ said that whoso believeth not shall be damned. Luke certainly did not hear it. Maybe he forgot it. Perhaps he did not think that it was worth recording. Now, it is the most important thing, if Christ said it, that he ever said.

Then I turn to John, and he gives an account of the last conversation, but not one solitary word on the subject of belief or unbelief. Not one solitary word on the subject of damnation. Not one. John might not have been listening.

Then I turn to the first chapter of the Acts, and there I find an account of the last conversation; and in that conversation there is not one word upon this

subject. This is a demonstration that the passage in Mark is an interpolation. What other reason have I got? There is not one particle of sense in it. Why? No man can control his belief. You hear evidence for and against, and the integrity of the soul stands at the scales and tells which side rises and which side falls. You cannot believe as you wish. You must believe as you must. And he might as well have said: "Go into the world and preach the gospel, and whosoever has red hair shall be saved, and whosoever hath not shall be damned."

I have another reason. I am much obliged to the gentleman who interpolated these passages. I am much obliged to him that he put in some more—two more. Now hear:—

"And these signs shall follow them that believe." Good!

"In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Bring on your believer! Let him cast out a devil. I do not ask for a large one. Just a little one for a cent. Let him take up serpents. "And if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Let me mix up a dose for the believer, and if it does not hurt him I will join a Church. "Oh! but," they say, "those things only lasted through the Apostolic age." Let us see. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel, and whosoever believes and is baptised shall be saved, and these signs shall follow them that believe."

How long? I think at least until they had gone into all the world. Certainly those signs should follow until all the world had been visited. And yet, if that declaration was in the mouth of Christ, he then knew that one-half of the world was unknown, and that he would be dead fourteen hundred and fifty-nine years before his disciples would know that there was another continent. And

yet he said: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel," and he knew then that it would be fourteen hundred and fifty-nine years before anybody could go. Well, if it was worth while to have signs follow believers in the Old World, surely it was worth while to have signs follow believers in the New. And the very reason that signs should follow would be to convince the unbeliever, and there are as many unbelievers now as ever, and the signs are as necessary to-day as they ever were. I would like a few myself.

This frightful declaration, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," has filled the world with agony and crime. Every letter of this passage has been sword and faggot; every word has been dungeon and chain. That passage made the sword of persecution drip with innocent blood through centuries of agony and crime. That passage made the horizon of a thousand lurid with the faggot's flames. That passage contradicts the Sermon on the Mount; travesties the Lord's Prayer; turns the splendid religion of deed and duty into the superstition of creed and cruelty. I deny it. It is infamous! Christ never said it!

IV.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

It is sufficient to say that Luke agrees substantially with Matthew and Mark.

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Good!

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Good!

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." Good! I like it.

"For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

He agrees substantially with Mark;

he agrees substantially with Matthew; and I come at last to the nineteenth chapter.

"And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and, if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.' And Jesus said unto him, 'This day is salvation come to this house.'"

That is good doctrine. He did not ask Zaccheus what he believed. He did not ask him, "Do you believe in the Bible? Do you believe in the five points? Have you ever been baptised—sprinkled? Oh! immersed?" "Half of my goods I give to the poor, and, if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." And Christ said, "This day is salvation come to this house." Good!

I read also in Luke that Christ, when upon the cross, forgave his murderers, and that is considered the shining gem in the crown of his mercy. He forgave his murderers. He forgave the men who drove the nails in his hands, in his feet, that plunged a spear in his side; the soldier that in the hour of death offered him in mockery the bitterness to drink. He forgave them all freely, and yet, although he would forgive them, he will, as we are told by the Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century, damn to eternal fire a noble man for the expression of his honest thoughts. That will not do. I find, too, in Luke an account of two thieves that were crucified at the same time. The other Gospels speak of them. One says they both railed upon him. Another says nothing about it. In Luke we are told that one railed upon him, but one of the thieves looked and pitied Christ, and Christ said to that thief:

"To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Why did he say that? Because the thief pitied him. God cannot afford to trample beneath the feet of his infinite wrath the smallest blossom of pity that ever shed its perfume in the human heart!

Who was this thief? To what Church did he belong? I do not know. The fact that he was a thief throws no light on that question. Who was he? What did he believe? I do not know. Did he believe in the Old Testament? In the miracles? I do not know. Did he believe that Christ was God? I do not know. Why, then, was the promise made to him that he should meet Christ in Paradise? Simply because he pitied suffering innocence upon the cross.

God cannot afford to damn any man who is capable of pitying anybody.

V.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

And now we come to John, and that is where the trouble commences.

The other Gospels teach that God will be merciful to the merciful, forgiving to the forgiving, kind to the kind, loving to the loving, just to the just, merciful to the good.

Now we come to John, and here is another doctrine. And allow me to say that John was not written until long after the others. John was mostly written by the Church.

"Jesus answered and said unto them: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

Why did he not tell Matthew that? Why did he not tell Luke that? Why did he not tell Mark that? They never heard of it, or forgot it, or they did not believe it.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Why?

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and, he might have added, that which is born of water is water.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'ye must be born again.'" And then

the reason is given, and I admit I did not understand it myself until I read the reason, and when you hear the reason you will understand it as well as I do; and here it is: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." So, I find in the book of John the idea of the Real Presence.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

"And shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

"And this is the will of Him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

"No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

"I am that bread of life.

"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

"Then Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

"Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

"This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."

"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

So I find in the book of John that, in order to be saved, we must not only believe in Jesus Christ, but we must eat the flesh and we must drink the blood of Jesus Christ. If that Gospel is true, the Catholic Church is right. But it is not true. I cannot believe it, and yet, for all that, it may be true. But I do not believe it. Neither do I believe

there is any god in the universe who will damn a man simply for expressing his belief.

"Why," they say to me, "suppose all this should turn out to be true, and you should come to the day of judgment and find all these things to be true. What would you do then?" I would walk up like a man and say, "I was mistaken."

"And suppose God was about to pass judgment upon you, what would you say?" I would say to him, "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." Why not?

I am told that I must render good for evil. I am told that, if smitten on one cheek, I must turn the other. I am told that I must overcome evil with good. I am told that I must love my enemies; and will it do for this God who tells me to love my enemies to damn his? No, it will not do. It will not do.

In the book of John all these doctrines of regeneration—that it is necessary to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; that salvation depends upon belief—in this book of John all these doctrines find their warrant; nowhere else.

Read Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and then read John, and you will agree with me that the three first Gospels teach that, if we are kind and forgiving to our fellows, God will be kind and forgiving to us. In John we are told that another man can be good for us, or bad for us, and that the only way to get to heaven is to believe something that we know is not so.

All these passages about believing in Christ, drinking his blood and eating his flesh, are after-thoughts. They were written by the theologians, and in a few years they will be considered unworthy of the lips of Christ.

VI.

THE CATHOLICS.

Now, upon these Gospels that I have read the Churches rest; and out of these things, mistakes, and interpolations they

have made their creeds. And the first Church to make a creed, so far as I know, was the Catholic. It was the first Church that had any power. That is the Church that has preserved all these miracles for us. That is the Church that preserved the manuscripts for us. That is the Church whose word we have to take. That Church is the first witness that Protestantism brought to the bar of history to prove miracles that took place eighteen hundred years ago; and while the witness is there Protestantism takes pains to say: "You cannot believe one word that witness says, *now*."

That Church is the only one that keeps up a constant communication with heaven through the instrumentality of a large number of decayed saints. That Church has an agent of God on earth, has a person who stands in the place of deity; and that Church is infallible. That Church has persecuted to the exact extent of her power—and always will. In Spain that Church stands erect, and is arrogant. In the United States that Church crawls; but the object in both countries is the same, and that is the destruction of intellectual liberty. That Church teaches us that we can make God happy by being miserable ourselves; that a nun is holier in the sight of God than a loving mother with her child in her thrilled and thrilling arms; that a priest is better than a father; that celibacy is better than that passion of love that has made everything of beauty in this world. That Church tells the girl of sixteen or eighteen years of age, with eyes like dew and light; that girl with the red of health in the white of her beautiful cheeks—tells that girl, "Put on the veil, woven of death and night, kneel upon stones, and you will please God."

I tell you that, by law, no girl should be allowed to take the veil and renounce the joys and beauties of this life.

I am opposed to allowing these spider-like priests to weave webs to catch the loving maidens of the world. There ought to be a law appointing commis-

sioners to visit such places twice a year and release every person who expresses a desire to be released. I do not believe in keeping the penitentiaries of God. No doubt they are honest about it. That is not the question. These ignorant superstitions fill millions of lives with weariness and pain, with agony and tears.

This Church, after a few centuries of thought, made a creed, and that creed is the foundation of the orthodox religion. Let me read it to you:—

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith; which faith except everyone do keep entire and inviolate, without doubt, he shall everlastingly perish." Now the faith is this: "That we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity."

Of course, you understand how that is done, and there is no need of my explaining it. "Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance." You see what a predicament that would leave the deity in if you divided the substance.

"For one is the person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one"—you know what I mean by Godhead. "In glory equal, and in majesty coëternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such is the Holy Ghost. The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost incomprehensible." And that is the reason we know so much about the thing. "The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Ghost eternal, and yet there are not three eternals, only one eternal, as also there are not three uncreated, nor three incomprehensibles, only one uncreated, one incomprehensible."

"In like manner, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Ghost almighty. Yet there are not three almighties, only one almighty. So the

Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God, and yet not three Gods; and so, likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord, yet there are not three Lords, for as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so we are all forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of no one; not created or begotten. The Son is from the Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made nor begotten, but proceeding."

You know what proceeding is.

"So there is one Father, not three Fathers." Why should there be three Fathers, and only one Son? "One Son, and not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts; and in this Trinity there is nothing before or afterward, nothing greater or less, but the whole three persons are coëternal with one another and coëqual, so that in all things the unity is to be worshipped in Trinity, and the Trinity is to be worshipped in unity. Those who will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the right of this thing is this: That we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man. He is God of the substance of his Father begotten before the world was."

That was a good while before his mother lived.

"And he is man of the substance of his mother, born in this world, perfect God and perfect man, and the rational soul in human flesh, subsisting equal to the Father according to his Godhead, but less than the Father according to his manhood, who, being both God and man, is not two, but one, one not by conversion of God into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God."

You see that is a great deal easier than the other way would be.

"One altogether, not by a confusion of substance, but by unity of person, for as the rational soul and the flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and he sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, and He shall come to judge the living and the dead."

In order to be saved, it is necessary to believe this. What a blessing that we do not have to understand it. And in order to compel the human intellect to get upon its knees before that infinite absurdity, thousands and millions have suffered agonies; thousands and thousands have perished in dungeons and in fire; and if all the bones of all the victims of the Catholic Church could be gathered together, a monument higher than all the pyramids would rise, in the presence of which the eyes even of priests would be wet with tears.

That Church covered Europe with cathedrals and dungeons, and robbed men of the jewel of the soul. That Church had ignorance upon its knees. That Church went in partnership with the tyrants of the throne, and between those two vultures, the altar and the throne, the heart of man was devoured.

Of course I have met, and cheerfully admit that there are, thousands of good Catholics; but Catholicism is contrary to human liberty. Catholicism bases salvation upon belief. Catholicism teaches man to trample his reason under foot. And for that reason it is wrong.

Thousands of volumes could not contain the crimes of the Catholic Church. They could not contain even the names of her victims. With sword and fire, with rack and chain, with dungeon and whip, she endeavoured to convert the world. In weakness a beggar—in power a highwayman—alms dish or dagger—tramp or tyrant.

VII.

THE EPISCOPALIANS.

The next Church I wish to speak of is the Episcopalian. That was founded by Henry VIII., now in heaven. He cast off Queen Catherine and Catholicism together, and he accepted Episcopalianism and Annie Boleyn at the same time. That Church, if it had a few more ceremonies, would be Catholic. If it had a few less, nothing. We have an Episcopalian Church in this country, and it has all the imperfections of a poor relation. It is always boasting of its rich relative. In England the creed is made by law, the same as we pass statutes here. And when a gentleman dies in England, in order to determine whether he shall be saved or not, it is necessary for the power of heaven to read the Acts of Parliament. It becomes a question of law, and sometimes a man is damned on a very nice point. Lost on demurrer.

A few years ago a gentleman by the name of Seabury—Samuel Seabury—was sent over to England to get some apostolic succession. We had not a drop in the house. It was necessary for the bishops of the English Church to put their hands upon his head. They refused. There was no Act of Parliament justifying it. He had then to go to the Scotch bishops; and, had the Scotch bishops refused, we never would have had any apostolic succession in the New World, and God would have been driven out of half the earth, and the true Church never could have been founded upon this continent. But the Scotch bishops put their hands on his head, and now we have an unbroken succession of heads and hands from St. Paul to the last bishop.

In this country the Episcopalians have done some good, and I want to thank that Church. Having on an average less religion than the others—on an average you have done more good to mankind. You preserved some of the humanities. You did not hate music; you did not absolutely despise painting;

and you did not altogether abhor architecture; and you, finally, admitted that it was no worse to keep time with your feet than with your hands. And some went so far as to say that people could play cards, and that God would overlook it, or would look the other way. For all these things accept my thanks.

When I was a boy, the other Churches looked upon dancing as probably the mysterious sin against the Holy Ghost; and they used to teach that when four boys got in a hay-mow, playing seven-up, that the eternal God stood whetting the sword of his eternal wrath waiting to strike them down to the lowest hell. That Church has done some good.

The Episcopal creed is substantially like the Catholic, containing a few additional absurdities. The Episcopalians teach that it is easier to get forgiveness for sin after you have been baptised. They seem to think that the moment you are baptised you become a member of the firm, and, as such, are entitled to wickedness at cost. This Church is utterly unsuited to a free people. Its government is tyrannical, supercilious, and absurd. Bishops talk as though they were responsible for the souls in their charge. They wear vests that button on one side. Nothing is so essential to the clergy of this denomination as a good voice. The Episcopalians have persecuted just to the extent of their power. Their treatment of the Irish has been a crime—a crime lasting for three hundred years. That Church persecuted the Puritans of England and the Presbyterians of Scotland. In England the altar is the mistress of the throne, and this mistress has always looked at honest wives with scorn.

VIII.

THE METHODISTS.

About a hundred and fifty years ago two men, John Wesley and George Whitfield, said: If everybody is going to hell, somebody ought to mention it. The Episcopal clergy said: Keep still;

do not tear your gown. Wesley and Whitfield said : This frightful truth ought to be proclaimed from the housetop at every opportunity, from the highway on every occasion. They were good, honest men. They believed their doctrine. And they said : If there is a hell, and a Niagara of souls pouring over an eternal precipice of ignorance, somebody ought to say something. They were right ; somebody ought, if such a thing is true. Wesley was a believer in the Bible. He believed in the actual presence of the Almighty. God used to do miracles for him ; used to put off a rain several days to give his meeting a chance ; used to cure his horse of lameness ; used to cure Mr. Wesley's headaches.

And Mr. Wesley also believed in the actual existence of the devil. He believed that devils had possession of people. He talked to the devil when he was in folks, and the devil told him that he was going to leave ; and that he was going into another person. That he would be there at a certain time ; and Wesley went to that other person, and there the devil was, prompt to the minute. He regarded every conversion as warfare between God and this devil for the possession of that human soul, and that in the warfare God had gained the victory. Honest, no doubt. Mr. Wesley did not believe in human liberty. Honest, no doubt. Was opposed to the liberty of the Colonies. Honestly so. Mr. Wesley preached a sermon entitled "The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes," in which he took the ground that earthquakes were caused by sin, and that the only way to stop them was to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. No doubt an honest man.

Wesley and Whitfield fell out on the question of predestination. Wesley insisted that God invited everybody to the feast. Whitfield said he did not invite those he knew would not come. Wesley said he did. Whitfield said : Well, he did not put plates for them, anyway. Wesley said he did. So that when they were in hell he could show

them that there was a seat left for them. The Church that they founded is still active. And probably no Church in the world has done so much preaching for as little money as the Methodists. Whitfield believed in slavery, and advocated the slave trade. And it was of Whitfield that Whittier made the two lines :—

"He bade the slave ships speed from coast to coast,
Fanned by the wings of the Holy Ghost."

We have lately had a meeting of the Methodists, and I find by their statistics that they believe that they have converted 130,000 folks in a year. That, in order to do this, they have 26,000 preachers, 226,000 Sunday-school scholars, and about \$100,000,000 invested in Church property. I find, in looking over the history of the world, that there are 40,000,000 or 50,000,000 of people born a year, and, if they are saved at the rate of 130,000 a year, about how long will it take that doctrine to save this world? Good, honest people ; but they are mistaken.

In old times they were very simple. Churches used to be like barns. They used to have them divided—men on that side, and women on this. A little barbarous. We have advanced since then, and we now find as a fact, demonstrated by experience, that a man sitting by the woman he loves can thank God as heartily as though sitting between two men that he has never been introduced to.

There is another thing the Methodists should remember, and that is that the Episcopalians were the greatest enemies they ever had. And they should remember that the Freethinkers have always treated them kindly and well.

There is one thing about the Methodist Church in the North that I like. But I find that it is not Methodism that does that. I find that the Methodist Church in the South is as much opposed to liberty as the Methodist Church North is in favour of liberty. So it is not Methodism that is in favour of liberty or slavery.

They differ a little in their creed from the rest. They do not believe that God does everything. They believe that he does his part, and that you must do the rest, and that getting to heaven is a partnership business. The Methodist Church is adapted to new countries—its ministers are generally uncultured, and with them zeal takes the place of knowledge. They convert people with noise. In the silence that follows most of the converts backslide.

In a little while a struggle will commence between the few who are growing and the orthodox many. The few will be driven out, and the Church will be governed by those who believe without understanding.

IX.

THE PRESBYTERIANS.

The next Church is the Presbyterian, and, in my judgment, the worst of all, as far as creed is concerned. This Church was founded by John Calvin, a murderer!

John Calvin, having power in Geneva, inaugurated human torture. Voltaire abolished torture in France. The man who abolished torture, if the Christian religion be true, God is now torturing in hell, and the man who inaugurated torture is now a glorified angel in heaven. It will not do.

John Knox started this doctrine in Scotland, and there is this peculiarity about Presbyterianism—it grows best where the soil is poorest. I read the other day an account of a meeting between John Knox and John Calvin. Imagine a dialogue between a pestilence and a famine! Imagine a conversation between a block and an ax! As I read their conversation, it seemed to me as though John Knox and John Calvin were made for each other; that they fitted each other like the upper and lower jaws of a wild beast. They believed happiness was a crime; they looked upon laughter as blasphemy; and they did all they could to destroy every

human feeling, and to fill the mind with the infinite gloom of predestination and eternal death. They taught the doctrine that God had a right to damn us because he made us. That is just the reason that he has not a right to damn us. There is some dust! Unconscious dust! What right has God to change that unconscious dust into a human being, when he knows that human being will sin; when he knows that human being will suffer eternal agony? Why not leave him in the unconscious dust? What right has an infinite God to add to the sum of human agony? Suppose I knew that I could change that piece of furniture into a living, sentient human being, and I knew that that being would suffer untold agony forever. If I did it, I would be a fiend. I would leave that being in the unconscious dust. And yet we are told that we must believe such a doctrine, or we are to be eternally damned! It will not do!

In 1839 there was a division in this Church, and they had a lawsuit to see which was the Church of God. And they tried it by a judge and jury, and the jury decided that the new school was the Church of God, and then they got a new trial, and the next jury decided that the old school was the Church of God, and that settled it. That Church teaches that infinite innocence was sacrificed for me! I do not want it! I do not wish to go to heaven unless I can settle by the books, and go there because I ought to go there. I have said, and I say again, I do not wish to be a charity angel. I have no ambition to become a winged pauper of the skies.

The other day a young gentleman, a Presbyterian who had just been converted, came to me, and he gave me a tract, and he told me he was perfectly happy. Said I:

“Do you think a great many people are going to hell?”

“Oh, yes.”

“And you are perfectly happy?”

Well, he did not know as he was, quite.

"Would you not be happier if they were all going to heaven?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, then, you are not perfectly happy?"

No, he did not think he was.

"When you get to heaven, then you will be perfectly happy?"

"Oh, yes."

"Now, when we are only going to hell, you are not quite happy; but when we are in hell, and you are in heaven, then you will be perfectly happy? You will not be as decent when you get to be an angel as you are now, will you?"

"Well," he said, "that was not exactly it."

Said I: "Suppose your mother were in hell, would you be happy in heaven then?"

"Well," he says, "I suppose God would know the best place for mother."

And I thought to myself, then, if I was a woman, I would like to have five or six boys like that.

It will not do. Heaven is where those are we love and those who love us. And I wish to go to no world unless I can be accompanied by those who love me here. Talk about the consolations of this infamous doctrine. The consolations of a doctrine that makes a father say, "I can be happy with my daughter in hell"; that makes a mother say, "I can be happy with my generous, brave boy in hell"; that makes a boy say, "I can enjoy the glory of heaven with the woman who bore me, the woman *who would have died for me*, in eternal agony." And they call that tidings of great joy.

No Church has done more to fill the world with gloom than the Presbyterian. Its creed is frightful, hideous, and hellish. The Presbyterian God is the monster of monsters. He is an eternal executioner, jailer, and turnkey. He will enjoy for ever the shrieks of the lost—the wails of the damned. Hell is the festival of the Presbyterian God.

X.

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

I have not time to speak of the Baptists—that Jeremy Taylor said were as much to be rooted out as anything that is the greatest pest and nuisance on the earth. He hated the Baptists because they represented, in some little degree, the liberty of thought. Nor have I time to speak of the Quakers, the best of all, and abused by all. I cannot forget that John Fox, in the year of grace 1640, was put in the pillory and whipped from town to town, scarred, put in a dungeon, beaten, trampled upon, and what for? Simply because he preached the doctrine: "Thou shalt not resist evil with evil." "Thou shalt love thy enemies." Think of what the Church must have been that day to scar the flesh of that loving man! Just think of it! I say I have not time to speak of all these sects—the varieties of Presbyterians and Campbellites. There are hundreds and hundreds of these sects, all founded upon this creed that I read, differing simply in degree.

Ah! but they say to me: You are fighting something that is dead. Nobody believes this now. The preachers do not believe what they preach in the pulpit. The people in the pews do not believe what they hear preached. And they say to me: You are fighting something that is dead. This is all a form; we do not believe a solitary creed in the world. We sign them and swear that we believe them, but we do not. And none of us do. And all the ministers, they say in private, admit that they do not believe it, not quite. I do not know whether this is so or not. I take it that they believe what they preach. I take it that, when they meet and solemnly agree to a creed, they are honest and really believe in that creed. But let us see if I am waging a war against the ideas of the dead. Let us see if I am simply storming a cemetery.

The Evangelical Alliance, made up of all orthodox denominations of the

world, met only a few years ago, and here is their creed: They believe in the divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures; the right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, but if you interpret wrong you are damned. They believe in the unity of the Godhead and the Trinity of the persons therein. They believe in the utter depravity of human nature. There can be no more infamous doctrine than that. They look upon a little child as a lump of depravity. I look upon it as a bud of humanity, that will, in the air and light of love and joy, blossom into rich and glorious life.

Total depravity of human nature! Here is a woman whose husband has been lost at sea; the news comes that he has been drowned by the ever-hungry waves, and she waits. There is something in her heart that tells her he is alive. And she waits. And years afterwards, as she looks down towards the little gate, she sees him; he has been given back by the sea, and she rushes to his arms, and covers his face with kisses and with tears. And if that infamous doctrine is true, every tear is a crime, and every kiss a blasphemy. It will not do. According to that doctrine, if a man steals and repents, and takes back the property, the repentance and the taking back of the property are two other crimes. It is an infamy. What else do they believe? "The justification of a sinner by faith alone," without works—just faith. Believing something that you do not understand. Of course, God cannot afford to reward a man for believing anything that is reasonable. God rewards only for believing something that is unreasonable. If you believe something that is improbable and unreasonable, you are a Christian; but if you believe something that you know is not so, then—you are a saint.

They believe in the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and in the eternal punishment of the wicked.

Tidings of great joy! They are so

good that they will not associate with Universalists. They will not associate with Unitarians; they will not associate with scientists; they will only associate with those who believe that God so loved the world that he made up his mind to damn the most of us.

The Evangelical Alliance reiterates the absurdities of the Dark Ages—repeats the five points of Calvin—replenishes the fires of hell—certifies to the mistakes and miracles of the Bible—maligns the human race, and kneels to a God who accepted the agony of the innocent as an atonement for the guilty.

XI.

WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE?

Then they say to me: "What do you propose? You have torn this down; what do you propose to give us in place of it?" I have not torn the good down. I have only endeavoured to trample out the ignorant, cruel fires of hell. I do not tear away the passage: "God will be merciful to the merciful." I do not destroy the promise: "If you will forgive others, God will forgive you." I would not for anything blot out the faintest star that shines in the horizon of human despair, nor in the sky of human hope; but I will do what I can to get that infinite shadow out of the heart of man.

"What do you propose in place of this?"

Well, in the first place, I propose good fellowship—good friends all around. No matter what we believe, shake hands and let it go. That is your opinion; this is mine: let us be friends. Science makes friends; religion, superstition, makes enemies. They say: Belief is important. I say: No, actions are important. Judge by deed, not by creed. Good fellowship—good friends—sincere men and women—mutual forbearance, born of mutual respect. We have had too many of these solemn people. Whenever I see an exceedingly solemn man I know he is an exceedingly stupid man. No man of any

humour ever founded a religion—never. Humour sees both sides. While reason is the holy light, humour carries the lantern, and the man with a keen sense of humour is preserved from the solemn stupidities of superstition. I like a man who has got good feeling for everybody; good fellowship. One man said to another:

"Will you take a glass of wine?"

"I do not drink."

"Will you smoke a cigar?"

"I do not smoke."

"Maybe you will chew something?"

"I do not chew."

"Let us eat some hay."

"I tell you I do not eat hay."

"Well, then, good-by, for you are no company for man or beast."

I believe in the gospel of cheerfulness, the gospel of good nature, the gospel of good health. Let us pay some attention to our bodies. Take care of our bodies, and our souls will take care of themselves. Good health! And I believe the time will come when the public thought will be so great and grand that it will be looked upon as infamous to perpetuate disease. I believe the time will come when man will not fill the future with consumption and insanity. I believe the time will come when we will study ourselves, and understand the laws of health, and then we will say: "We are under obligation to put the flags of health in the cheeks of our children." Even if I got to heaven and had a harp, I would hate to look back upon my children and grandchildren, and see them diseased, deformed, crazed—all suffering the penalties of crimes I had committed.

I believe in the gospel of good living. You cannot make any god happy by fasting! Let us have good food, and let us have it well cooked—and it is a thousand times better to know how to cook than it is to understand any theology in the world. I believe in the gospel of good clothes; I believe in the gospel of good houses; in the gospel of water and soap. I believe in the gospel

of intelligence; in the gospel of education. The school-house is my cathedral. The universe is my Bible. I believe in the gospel of justice, that we must reap what we sow.

I do not believe in forgiveness as it is preached by the Church. We do not need the forgiveness of God, but of each other and of ourselves. If I rob Mr. Smith, and God forgives me, how does that help Smith? If I, by slander, cover some poor little girl with the leprosy of some imputed crime, and she withers away like a blighted flower, and afterwards I get the forgiveness of God, how does that help her? If there is another world, we have got to settle with the people we have wronged in this. No bankrupt court there. Every cent must be paid.

The Christians say that among the ancient Jews, if you committed a crime, you had to kill a sheep. Now they say "Charge it." "Put it on the slate." It will not do. For every crime you commit you must answer to yourself and to the one you injure. And if you have ever clothed another with woe, as with a garment of pain, you will never be quite as happy as though you had not done that thing. No forgiveness by the gods. Eternal, inexorable, everlasting justice, so far as nature is concerned. You must reap the result of your acts. Even when forgiven by the one you have injured, it is not as though the injury had not been done. That is what I believe in. And if it goes hard with me, I will stand it, and I will cling to my logic, and I will bear it like a man.

And I believe, too, in the gospel of liberty, in giving to others what we claim for ourselves. I believe there is room everywhere for thought, and the more liberty you give away, the more you will have. In liberty extravagance is economy. Let us be just. Let us be generous to each other.

I believe in the gospel of intelligence. That is the only lever capable of raising mankind. Intelligence must be the saviour of this world. Humanity is the grand

religion, and no God can put a man in hell in another world who has made a little heaven in this. God cannot make a man miserable if that man has made somebody else happy. God cannot hate anybody who is capable of loving anybody. Humanity—that word embraces all there is.

So I believe in this great Gospel of Humanity.

"Ah! but," they say, "it will not do. You must believe." I say, No. My gospel of health will bring life. My gospel of intelligence, my gospel of good living, my gospel of good-fellowship, will cover the world with happy homes. My doctrine will put carpets upon your floors, pictures upon your walls. My doctrine will put books upon your shelves, ideas in your minds. My doctrine will rid the world of the abnormal monsters born of ignorance and superstition. My doctrine will give us health, wealth, and happiness. That is what I want. That is what I believe in. Give us intelligence. In a little while a man will find that he cannot steal without robbing himself. He will find that he cannot murder without assassinating his own joy. He will find that every crime is a mistake. He will find that only that man carries the cross who does wrong, and that upon the man who does right the cross turns to wings that will bear him upward for ever. He will find that even intelligent self-love embraces within its mighty arms all the human race.

"Oh," but they say to me, "you take away immortality." I do not. If we are immortal, it is a fact in nature, and we are not indebted to priests for it, nor to Bibles for it, and it cannot be destroyed by unbelief.

As long as we love we will hope to live, and when the one dies that we love we will say: "Oh, that we could meet again," and whether we do or not it will not be the work of theology. It will be a fact in nature. I would not for my life destroy one star of human hope, but I want it so that, when a poor woman

rocks the cradle and sings a lullaby to the dimpled darling, she will not be compelled to believe that ninety-nine chances in a hundred she is raising kindling wood for hell.

One world at a time is my doctrine.

It is said in this Testament, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"; and I say, Sufficient unto each world is the evil thereof.

And suppose, after all, that death does end all. Next to eternal joy, next to being for ever with those we love and those who have loved us, next to that is to be wrapped in the dreamless drapery of eternal peace. Next to eternal life is eternal sleep. Upon the shadowy shore of death the sea of trouble casts no wave. Eyes that have been curtained by the everlasting dark will never know again the burning touch of tears. Lips touched by eternal silence will never speak again the broken words of grief. Hearts of dust do not break. The dead do not weep. Within the tomb no veiled and weeping sorrow sits, and in the rayless gloom is crouched no shuddering fear.

I had rather think of those I have loved, and lost, as having returned to earth, as having become a part of the elemental wealth of the world—I would rather think of them as unconscious dust, I would rather dream of them as gurgling in the streams, floating in the clouds, bursting in the foam of light upon the shores of worlds, I would rather think of them as the lost visions of a forgotten night, than to have even the faintest fear that their naked souls have been clutched by an orthodox God. I will leave my dead where nature leaves them. Whatever flower of hope springs up in my heart I will cherish; I will give it breath of sighs and rain of tears. But I cannot believe that there is any being in this universe who has created a human soul for eternal pain. I would rather that every god would destroy himself; I would rather that we all should go to eternal chaos, to black and starless night, than that just one soul should suffer eternal agony.

I have made up my mind that, if there is a God, he will be merciful to the merciful.

Upon that rock I stand.

That he will not torture the forgiving.

Upon that rock I stand.

That every man should be true to

himself, and that there is no world, no star, in which honesty is a crime.

Upon that rock I stand.

The honest man, the good woman, the happy child, have nothing to fear either in this world or the world to come.

Upon that rock I stand.

THE LIBERTY OF MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD

LIBERTY SUSTAINS THE SAME RELATION TO MIND THAT SPACE DOES TO MATTER.

THERE is no slavery but ignorance. Liberty is the child of Intelligence.

The history of man is simply the history of slavery, of injustice and brutality, together with the means by which he has, through the dead and desolate years, slowly and painfully advanced. He has been the sport and prey of priest and king, the food of superstition and cruel might. Crowned force has governed ignorance through fear. Hypocrisy and tyranny—two vultures—have fed upon the liberties of man. From all these there has been, and is, but one means of escape—intellectual development. Upon the back of industry has been the whip. Upon the brain have been the fetters of superstition. Nothing has been left undone by the enemies of freedom. Every art and artifice, every cruelty and outrage, has been practised and perpetrated to destroy the rights of man. In this great struggle every crime has been rewarded and every virtue has been punished. Reading, writing, thinking, and investigating have all been crimes.

Every science has been an outcast.

All the altars and all the thrones united to arrest the forward march of the human race. The king said that mankind must not work for themselves. The priest said that mankind must not think for themselves. One forged chains for the hands, the other for the soul. Under this infamous *regime* the eagle of the human intellect was for ages a slimy serpent of hypocrisy.

The human race was imprisoned. Through some of the prison bars came a few struggling rays of light. Against these bars science pressed its pale and

thoughtful face, wooed by the holy dawn of human advancement. Bar after bar was broken away. A few grand men escaped and devoted their lives to the liberation of their fellows.

Only a few years ago there was a great awakening of the human mind. Men began to inquire by what right a crowned robber made them work for him. The man who asked this question was called a traitor. Others asked, By what right does a robed hypocrite rule my thought? Such men were called infidels. The priest said, and the king said, Where is this spirit of investigation to stop? They said then, and they say now, that it is dangerous for man to be free. I deny it. Out on the intellectual sea there is room enough for every sail. In the intellectual air there is space enough for every wing.

The man who does not do his own thinking is a slave, and is a traitor to himself and to his fellow-men.

Every man should stand under the blue and stars, under the infinite flag of nature, the peer of every other man.

Standing in the presence of the Unknown, all have the same right to think, and all are equally interested in the great questions of origin and destiny. All I claim, all I plead for, is liberty of thought and expression. That is all. I do not pretend to tell what is absolutely true, but what I think is true. I do not pretend to tell all the truth.

I do not claim that I have floated level with the heights of thought, or that I have descended to the very depths of things. I simply claim that what ideas I have, I have a right to express; and that any man who denies that right to me is an intellectual thief and robber. That is all.

Take those chains from the human

soul. Break those fetters. If I have no right to think, why have I a brain? If I have no such right, have three or four men, or any number, who may get together, and sign a creed, and build a house, and put a steeple upon it, and a bell in it—have they the right to think? The good men, the good women, are tired of the whip and lash in the realm of thought. They remember the chain and faggot with a shudder. They are free, and they give liberty to others. Whoever claims any right that he is unwilling to accord to his fellow-men is dishonest and infamous.

In the good old times our fathers had the idea that they could make people believe to suit them. Our ancestors, in the ages that are gone, really believed that by force you could convince a man. You cannot change the conclusion of the brain by torture, nor by social ostracism. But I will tell you what you can do by these, and what you have done. You can make hypocrites by the million. You can make a man say that he has changed his mind; but he remains of the same opinion still. Put fetters all over him; crush his feet in iron boots; stretch him to the last gasp upon the holy rack; burn him, if you please, but his ashes will be of the same opinion still.

Our fathers in the good old times—and the best thing I can say about them is that they have passed away—had an idea that they could force men to think their way. That idea is still prevalent in many parts, even of this country. Even in our day some extremely religious people say: "We will not trade with that man; we will not vote for him; we will not hire him if he is a lawyer; we will die before we will take his medicine if he is a doctor; we will not invite him to dinner; we will socially ostracise him; he must come to our church; he must believe our doctrines; he must worship our god, or we will not in any way contribute to his support."

In the old times of which I have spoken they desired to make all men

think exactly alike. All the mechanical ingenuity of the world cannot make two clocks run exactly alike, and how are you going to make hundreds of millions of people, differing in brain and disposition, in education and aspiration, in conditions and surroundings, each clad in a living robe of passionate flesh—how are you going to make them think and feel alike? If there is an infinite God, one who made us, and wishes us to think alike, why did he give a spoonful of brains to one and a magnificent intellectual development to another? Why is it that we have all degrees of intelligence, from orthodoxy to genius, if it was intended that all should think and feel alike?

I used to read in books how our fathers persecuted mankind. But I never appreciated it. I read it, but it did not burn itself into my soul. I did not really appreciate the infamies that have been committed in the name of religion, until I saw the iron arguments that Christians used. I saw the thumb-screw—two little pieces of iron, armed on the inner surfaces with protuberances, to prevent their slipping; through each end a screw uniting the two pieces. And when some man denied the efficacy of baptism, or, may be, said "I do not believe that a fish ever swallowed a man to keep him from drowning," then they put his thumb between these pieces of iron, and, in the name of love and universal forgiveness, began to screw these pieces together. When this was done, most men said, "I will recant." Probably I should have done the same. Probably I would have said: "Stop, I will admit anything that you wish; I will admit that there is one god or a million, one hell or a billion; suit yourselves; but stop."

But there was now and then a man who would not swerve the breadth of a hair. There was now and then some sublime heart willing to die for an intellectual conviction. Had it not been for such men, we would be savages to-night. Had it not been for a few

brave, heroic souls in every age, we would have been cannibals, with pictures of wild beasts tattooed upon our flesh, dancing around some dried snake fetich.

Let us thank every good and noble man who stood so grandly, so proudly, in spite of opposition, of hatred and death, for what he believed to be the truth.

Heroism did not excite the respect of our fathers. The man who would not recant was not forgiven. They screwed the thumbscrews down to the last pang, and then threw their victim into some dungeon, where, in the throbbing silence and darkness, he might suffer the agonies of the fabled damned. This was done in the name of love—in the name of mercy—in the name of the compassionate Christ.

I saw, too, what they call the Collar of Torture. Imagine a circle of iron, and on the inside a hundred points almost as sharp as needles. This argument was fastened about the throat of the sufferer. Then he could not walk, nor sit down, nor stir without the neck being punctured by these points. In a little while the throat would begin to swell, and suffocation would end the agonies of that man. This man, it may be, had committed the crime of saying, with tears upon his cheeks, "I do not believe that God, the father of us all, will damn to eternal perdition any of the children of men."

I saw another instrument, called the Scavenger's Daughter. Think of a pair of shears with handles, not only where they now are, but at the points as well, and, just above the pivot that unites the blades, a circle of iron. In the upper handles the hands would be placed; in the lower, the feet; and through the iron ring, at the centre, the head of the victim would be forced. In this condition he would be thrown prone upon the earth, and the strain upon the muscles produced such agony that insanity would in pity end his pain.

This was done by gentlemen who

said: "Whosoever smiteth thee upon one cheek turn to him the other also."

I saw the Rack. This was a box like the bed of a waggon, with a windlass at each end, with levers, and rachets to prevent slipping; over each windlass went chains; some were fastened to the ankles of the sufferer; others to his wrists. And then priests, clergymen, divines, saints, began turning these windlasses, and kept turning, until the ankles, the knees, the hips, the shoulders, the elbows, the wrists of the victim, were all dislocated, and the sufferer was wet with the sweat of agony. And they had standing by a physician to feel his pulse. What for? To save his life? Yes. In mercy? No; simply that they might rack him once again.

This was done, remember, in the name of civilisation; in the name of law and order; in the name of mercy; in the name of religion; in the name of the most merciful Christ.

Sometimes, when I read and think about these frightful things, it seems to me that I have suffered all these horrors myself. It seems sometimes as though I had stood upon the shore of exile and gazed with tearful eyes towards home and native land; as though my nails had been torn from my hands, and into the bleeding quick needles had been thrust; as though my feet had been crushed in iron boots; as though I had been chained in the cell of the Inquisition and listened with dying ears for the coming footsteps of release; as though I had stood upon the scaffold and had seen the glittering axe fall upon me; as though I had been upon the rack and had seen, bending over me, the white faces of hypocrite priests; as though I had been taken from my fireside, from my wife and children, taken to the public square, chained; as though faggots had been piled about me; as though the flames had climbed around my limbs and scorched my eyes to blindness; and as though my ashes had been scattered to the four winds by all the countless hands of hate. And when I so feel, I

swear that while I live I will do what little I can to preserve and to augment the liberties of man, woman, and child.

It is a question of justice, of mercy, of honesty, of intellectual development. If there is a man in the world who is not willing to give to every human being every right he claims for himself, he is just so much nearer a barbarian than I am. It is a question of honesty. The man who is not willing to give to every other the same intellectual rights he claims for himself is dishonest, selfish, and brutal.

It is a question of intellectual development. Whoever holds another man responsible for his honest thought has a deformed and distorted brain. It is a question of intellectual development.

A little while ago I saw models of nearly everything that man has made. I saw models of all the water craft, from the rude dug-out in which floated a naked savage—one of our ancestors—a naked savage, with teeth two inches in length, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his head—I saw models of all the water craft of the world, from that dug-out up to a man-of-war, that carries a hundred guns and miles of canvas—from that dug-out to the steamship that turns its brave prow from the port of New York, with a compass like a conscience, crossing three thousand miles of billows without missing a throb or beat of its mighty iron heart.

I saw at the same time the weapons that man has made, from a club, such as was grasped by that same savage when he crawled from his den in the ground and hunted a snake for his dinner; from that club to the boomerang, to the sword, to the cross-bow, to the blunderbuss, to the flint-lock, to the cap-lock, to the needle-gun, up to a cannon cast by Krupp, capable of hurling a ball weighing two thousand pounds through eighteen inches of solid steel.

I saw, too, the armour from the shell of a turtle, that one of our brave ancestors lashed upon his breast when he went to fight for his country; the

skin of a porcupine, dried with the quills on, which this same savage pulled over his orthodox head, up to the shirts of mail that were worn in the Middle Ages, that laughed at the edge of the sword and defied the point of the spear; up to a monitor clad in complete steel.

I saw, at the same time, their musical instruments, from the tom-tom—that is, a hoop with a couple of strings of raw hide drawn across it—from the tom-tom, up to the instruments we have to-day, that make the common air blossom with melody.

I saw, too, their paintings, from a daub of yellow mud to the great works which now adorn the galleries of the world. I saw also their sculpture, from the rude god with four legs, a half-dozen arms, several noses, and two or three rows of ears, and one little, contemptible, brainless head, up to the figures of to-day—to the marbles that genius has clad in such a personality that it seems almost impudent to touch them without an introduction.

I saw their books—books written upon skins of wild beasts—upon shoulder-blades of sheep—books written upon leaves, upon bark, up to the splendid volumes that enrich the libraries of our day. When I speak of libraries, I think of the remark of Plato: "A house that has a library in it has a soul."

I saw their implements of agriculture, from a crooked stick that was attached to the horn of an ox by some twisted straw, to the agricultural implements of this generation, that make it possible for a man to cultivate the soil without being an ignoramus.

While looking upon these things I was forced to say that man advanced only as he mingled his thought with his labour—only as he got into partnership with the forces of nature—only as he learned to take advantage of his surroundings—only as he freed himself from the bondage of fear—only as he depended upon himself—only as he lost confidence in the gods.

I saw at the same time a row of human skulls, from the lowest skull that has been found, the Neanderthal skull—skulls from Central Africa, skulls from the Bushmen of Australia—skulls from the farthest isles of the Pacific Sea—up to the best skulls of the last generation—and I noticed that there was the same difference between those skulls that there was between the *products* of those skulls, and I said to myself: “After all, it is a simple question of intellectual development.” There was the same difference between those skulls, the lowest and highest skulls, that there was between the dug-out and the man-of-war and the steamship, between the club and the Krupp gun, between the yellow daub and the landscape, between the tom-tom and an opera by Verdi.

The first and lowest skull in this row was the den in which crawled the base and meaner instincts of mankind, and the last was a temple in which dwelt joy, liberty, and love.

It is all a question of brain, of intellectual development.

If we are nearer free than were our fathers, it is because we have better heads upon the average, and more brains in them.

Now, I ask you to be honest with me. It makes no difference to you what I believe, nor what I wish to prove. I simply ask you to be honest. Divest your minds, for a moment at least, of all religious prejudice. Act, for a few moments, as though you were men and women.

Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest, if there was one, at the time this gentleman floated in the dug-out, and charmed his ears with the music of the tom-tom, had said: “That dug-out is the best boat that ever can be built by man; the pattern of that came from on high, from the great God of storm and flood, and any man who says that he can improve it by putting a mast in it, with a sail upon it, is an infidel, and shall be burned at the stake”; what, in your judgment—honour bright—would

have been the effect upon the circumnavigation of the globe?

Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest, if there was one—and I presume there was a priest, because it was a very ignorant age—suppose this king and priest had said: “That tom-tom is the most beautiful instrument of music of which any man can conceive; that is the kind of music they have in heaven; an angel sitting upon the edge of a fleecy cloud, golden in the setting sun, playing upon that tom-tom, became so enraptured, so entranced with her own music, that in a kind of ecstasy she dropped it—that is how we obtained it; and any man who says that it can be improved by putting a back and front to it, and four strings, and a bridge, and getting a bow of hair with rosin, is a blaspheming wretch, and shall die the death”—I ask you what effect would that have had upon music? If that course had been pursued, would the human ears, in your judgment, ever have been enriched with the divine symphonies of Beethoven?

Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest had said: “That crooked stick is the best plough that can be invented; the pattern of that plough was given to a pious farmer in a holy dream, and that twisted straw is the *ne plus ultra* of all twisted things, and any man who says he can make an improvement upon that plough is an atheist”; what, in your judgment, would have been the effect upon the science of agriculture?

But the people said, and the king and priest said: “We want better weapons with which to kill our fellow Christians; we want better ploughs, better music, better paintings; and whoever will give us better weapons, and better music, better houses to live in, better clothes, we will robe him in wealth and crown him with honour.” Every incentive was held out to every human being to improve these things. That is the reason the club has been changed to a cannon, the dug-out to a steamship, the daub to a painting; that is the reason that the

piece of rough and broken stone finally became a glorified statue.

You must not, however, forget that the gentleman in the dug-out, the gentleman who was enraptured with the music of the tom-tom, and cultivated his land with a crooked stick, had a religion of his own. That gentleman in the dug-out was orthodox. He was never troubled with doubts. He lived and died settled in his mind. He believed in hell; and he thought he would be far happier in heaven if he could just lean over and see certain people who expressed doubts as to the truth of his creed gently but everlastingly broiled and burned.

It is a very sad and unhappy fact that this man has had a great many intellectual descendants. It is also an unhappy fact in nature that the ignorant multiply much faster than the intellectual. This fellow in the dug-out believed in a personal devil. His devil had a cloven hoof, a long tail, armed with a fiery dart; and his devil breathed brimstone. This devil was at least the equal of God; not quite so stout, but a little shrewder. And do you know there has not been a patentable improvement made upon that devil for six thousand years?

This gentleman in the dug-out believed that God was a tyrant; that he would eternally damn the man who lived in accordance with his highest and grandest ideal. He believed that the earth was flat. He believed in a literal burning, seething hell of fire and sulphur. He had also his idea of politics; and his doctrine was, might makes right. And it will take thousands of years before the world will reverse this doctrine, and believingly say, "Right makes might."

All I ask is the same privilege to improve upon that gentleman's theology as upon his musical instrument; the same right to improve upon his politics as upon his dug-out. That is all. I ask for the human soul the same liberty in every direction. That is the only crime

I have committed. I say, let us think. Let each one express his thought. Let us become investigators, not followers, not cringers and crawlers. If there is in heaven an Infinite Being, he never will be satisfied with the worship of cowards and hypocrites. Honest unbelief, honest infidelity, honest atheism, will be a perfume in heaven when pious hypocrisy, no matter how religious it may be outwardly, will be a stench.

This is my doctrine: Give every other human being every right you claim for yourself. Keep your mind open to the influences of nature. Receive new thoughts with hospitality. Let us advance.

The religionist of to-day wants the ship of his soul to lie at the wharf of orthodoxy and rot in the sun. He delights to hear the sails of old opinions flap against the masts of old creeds. He loves to see the joints and the sides open and gape in the sun, and it is a kind of bliss for him to repeat again and again: "Do not disturb my opinions. Do not unsettle my mind; I have it all made up, and I want no infidelity. Let me go backward rather than forward."

As far as I am concerned, I wish to be out on the high seas. I wish to take my chances with wind, and wave, and star. And I had rather go down in the glory and grandeur of the storm than to rot in any orthodox harbour whatever.

After all, we are improving from age to age. The most orthodox people in this country two hundred years ago would have been burned for the crime of heresy. The ministers who denounce me for expressing my thought would have been in the Inquisition themselves. Where once burned and blazed the bivouac fires of the army of progress now glare the altars of the Church. The religionists of our time are occupying about the same ground occupied by heretics and infidels of one hundred years ago. The Church has advanced in spite, as it were, of itself. It has followed the army of progress protesting and denouncing, and had to keep within

protesting and denouncing distance. If the Church had not made great progress, I could not express my thoughts.

Man, however, has advanced just exactly in the proportion with which he has mingled his thought with his labour. The sailor, without control of the wind and wave, knowing nothing or very little of the mysterious currents and pulses of the sea, is superstitious. So also is the agriculturist, whose prosperity depends upon something he cannot control. But the mechanic, when a wheel refuses to turn, never thinks of dropping on his knees and asking the assistance of some divine power. He knows there is a reason. He knows that something is too large or too small; that there is something wrong with his machine; and he goes to work, and he makes it larger or smaller, here or there, until the wheel will turn. Now, just in proportion as man gets away from being, as it were, the slave of his surroundings, the serf of the elements—of the heat, the frost, the snow, and the lightning—just to the extent that he has gotten control of his own destiny, just to the extent that he has triumphed over the obstacles of nature, he has advanced physically and intellectually. As man develops he places a greater value upon his own rights. Liberty becomes a grander and diviner thing. As he values his own rights, he begins to value the rights of others. And when all men give to all others all the rights they claim for themselves, this world will be civilised.

A few years ago the people were afraid to question the king, afraid to question the priest, afraid to investigate a creed, afraid to deny a book, afraid to denounce a dogma, afraid to reason, afraid to think. Before wealth they bowed to the very earth, and in the presence of titles they became abject. All this is slowly but surely changing. We no longer bow to men simply because they are rich. Our fathers worshipped the golden calf. The worst you can say of an American now is, he worships the

gold of the calf. Even the calf is beginning to see this distinction.

It no longer satisfies the ambition of a great man to be king or emperor. The last Napoleon was not satisfied with being the Emperor of the French. He was not satisfied with having a circlet of gold about his head. He wanted some evidence that he had something of value within his head. So he wrote the life of Julius Cæsar, that he might become a member of the French Academy. The emperors, the kings, the popes, no longer tower above their fellows. Compare King William with the philosopher Haeckel. The king is one of the anointed by the most high, as they claim—one upon whose head has been poured the divine petroleum of authority. Compare this king with Haeckel, who towers an intellectual colossus above the crowned mediocrity.

The world is beginning to pay homage to intellect, to genius, to heart.

We have advanced. We have reaped the benefit of every sublime and heroic self-sacrifice, of every divine and brave act; and we should endeavour to hand the torch to the next generation, having added a little to the intensity and glory of the flame.

When I think of how much this world has suffered; when I think of how long our fathers were slaves, of how they cringed and crawled at the foot of the throne, and in the dust of the altar, of how they abased themselves, of how abjectly they stood in the presence of superstition robed and crowned, I am amazed.

This world has not been fit for a man to live in fifty years. It was not until the year 1808 that Great Britain abolished the slave trade. Up to that time her judges, sitting upon the bench in the name of justice—her priests, occupying her pulpits in the name of universal love, owned stock in the slave ships, and luxuriated upon the profits of piracy and murder. It was not until the same year that the United States of America abolished the slave trade between this and

other countries, but carefully preserved it as between the States. It was not until the 28th day of August, 1833, that Great Britain abolished human slavery in her colonies; and it was not until the 1st day of January, 1863, that Abraham Lincoln, sustained by the sublime and heroic North, rendered our flag pure as the sky in which it floats.

Abraham Lincoln was, in my judgment, in many respects the grandest man ever President of the United States. Upon his monument these words should be written: "Here sleeps the only man in the history of the world who, having been clothed with almost absolute power, never abused it except upon the side of mercy."

Think how long we clung to the institution of human slavery, how long lashes upon the naked back were a legal tender for labour performed. Think of it. The pulpit of this country deliberately and willingly, for a hundred years, turned the cross of Christ into a whipping post.

With every drop of my blood I hate and execrate every form of tyranny, every form of slavery. I hate dictation. I love liberty.

What do I mean by liberty? By physical liberty I mean the right to do anything which does not interfere with the happiness of another. By intellectual liberty I mean the right to think right and the right to think wrong. Thought is the means by which we endeavour to arrive at truth. If we know the truth already, we need not think. All that can be required is honesty of purpose. You ask my opinion about anything; I examine it honestly, and when my mind is made up, what should I tell you? Should I tell you my real thought? What should I do? There is a book put in my hands. I am told this is the Koran; it was written by inspiration. I read it, and when I get through, suppose that I think in my heart and in my brain that it is utterly untrue, and you then ask me, What do you think? Now, admitting that I live

in Turkey, and have no chance to get any office unless I am on the side of the Koran, what should I say? Should I make a clean breast, and say that upon my honour I do not believe it? What would you think then of my fellow-citizens if they said: "That man is dangerous; he is dishonest"?

Suppose I read the book called the Bible, and when I get through I make up my mind that it was written by men. A minister asks me, "Did you read the Bible?" I answer that I did. "Do you think it divinely inspired?" What should I reply? Should I say to myself, "If I deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, the people will never clothe me with power"? What ought I to answer? Ought I not to say like a man: "I have read it; I do not believe it"? Should I not give the real transcript of my mind? Or should I turn hypocrite and pretend what I do not feel, and hate myself forever after for being a cringing coward. For my part, I would rather a man would tell me what he honestly thinks. I would rather he would preserve his manhood. I had a thousand times rather be a manly unbeliever than an unmanly believer. And if there is a judgment day, a time when all will stand before some supreme being, I believe I will stand higher, and stand a better chance of getting my case decided in my favour, than any man sneaking through life pretending to believe what he does not.

I have made up my mind to say my say. I shall do it kindly, distinctly; but I am going to do it. I know there are thousands of men who substantially agree with me, but who are not in a condition to express their thoughts. They are poor; they are in business; and they know that, should they tell their honest thought, persons will refuse to patronise them—to trade with them; they wish to get bread for their little children; they wish to take care of their wives; they wish to have homes and the comforts of life. Every such person is a certificate of the meanness of the

community in which he resides. And yet I do not blame these people for not expressing their thought. I say to them: "Keep your ideas to yourselves; feed and clothe the ones you love; I will do your talking for you. The Church cannot touch, cannot crush, cannot starve, cannot stop or stay me; I will express your thoughts."

As an excuse for tyranny, as a justification of slavery, the Church has taught that man is totally depraved. Of the truth of that doctrine the Church has furnished the only evidence there is. The truth is, we are both good and bad. The worst are capable of some good deeds, and the best are capable of bad. The lowest can rise, and the highest may fall. That mankind can be divided into two great classes, sinners and saints, is an utter falsehood. In times of great disaster—called, it may be, by the despairing voices of women—men, denounced by the Church as totally depraved, rush to death as to a festival. By such men deeds are done so filled with self-sacrifice and generous daring that millions pay to them the tribute not only of admiration, but of tears. Above all creeds, above all religions, after all, is that divine thing—humanity; and now and then in shipwreck on the wide, wild sea, or 'mid the rocks and breakers of some cruel shore, or where the serpents of flame writhe and hiss, some glorious heart, some chivalric soul, does a deed that glitters like a star, and gives the lie to all the dogmas of superstition. All these frightful doctrines have been used to degrade and to enslave mankind.

Away, forever away with the creeds and books and forms and laws and religions that take from the soul liberty and reason. Down with the idea that thought is dangerous! Perish the infamous doctrine that man can have property in man. Let us resent with indignation every effort to put a chain upon our minds. If there is no God, certainly we should not bow and cringe and crawl. If there is a God, there should be no slaves.

LIBERTY OF WOMAN.

Women have been the slaves of slaves; and in my judgment it took millions of ages for woman to come from the condition of abject slavery up to the institution of marriage. Let me say right here that I regard marriage as the holiest institution among men. Without the fireside there is no human advancement; without the family relation there is no life worth living. Every good government is made up of good families. The unit of good government is the family, and anything that tends to destroy the family is perfectly devilish and infamous. I believe in marriage, and I hold in utter contempt the opinions of those long-haired men and short-haired women who denounce the institution of marriage.

The grandest ambition that any man can possibly have is to so live and so improve himself in heart and brain as to be worthy of the love of some splendid woman; and the grandest ambition of any girl is to make herself worthy of the love and adoration of some magnificent man. That is my idea. There is no success in life without love and marriage. You had better be the emperor of one loving and tender heart, and she the empress of yours, than be king of the world. The man who has really won the love of one good woman in this world, I do not care if he dies in the ditch, a beggar, his life has been a success.

I say it took millions of years to come from the condition of abject slavery up to the condition of marriage. Ladies, the ornaments you wear upon your persons to-night are but the souvenirs of your mothers' bondage. The chains around your necks, and the bracelets clasped upon your white arms by the thrilled hand of love, have been changed by the wand of civilisation from iron to shining, glittering gold.

But nearly every religion has accounted for all the devilment in this world by the crime of woman. What a gallant thing that is! And if it is true, I had rather

live with the woman I love in a world full of trouble than to live in heaven with nobody but men.

I read in a book—and I will say now that I cannot give the exact language, as my memory does not retain the words, but I can give the substance—I read in a book that the Supreme Being concluded to make a world and one man; that he took some nothing and made a world and one man, and put this man in a garden. In a little while he noticed that the man got lonesome; that he wandered around as if he were waiting for a train. There was nothing to interest him; no news; no papers; no politics; no policy; and, as the devil had not yet made his appearance, there was no chance for reconciliation; not even for civil service reform. Well, he wandered about the garden in this condition, until finally the Supreme Being made up his mind to make him a companion.

Having used up all the nothing he originally took in making the world and one man, he had to take a part of the man to start a woman with. So he caused a sleep to fall on this man—now understand me, I do not say this story is true. After the sleep fell upon this man, the Supreme Being took a rib, or, as the French would call it, a cutlet, out of this man, and from that he made a woman. And, considering the amount of raw material used, I look upon it as the most successful job ever performed. Well, after he got the woman done, she was brought to the man, not to see how she liked him, but to see how he liked her. He liked her, and they started housekeeping; and they were told of certain things they might do, and of one thing they could not do—and, of course, they did it. I would have done it in fifteen minutes, and I know it. There wouldn't have been an apple on that tree half an hour from date, and the limbs would have been full of clubs. And then they were turned out of the park, and extra policemen were put on to keep them from getting back.

Devilment commenced. The mumps, and the measles, and the whooping-cough, and the scarlet fever started in their race for man. They began to have the toothache, roses began to have thorns, snakes began to have poisoned teeth, and people began to divide about religion and politics, and the world has been full of trouble from that day to this.

Nearly all of the religions of this world account for the existence of evil by such a story as that!

I read in another book what appeared to be an account of the same transaction. It was written about four thousand years before the other. All commentators agree that the one that was written last was the original, and that the one that was written first was copied from the one that was written last. But I would advise you all not to allow your creed to be disturbed by a little matter of four or five thousand years. In this other story Brahma made up his mind to make the world and a man and woman. He made the world, and he made the man and then the woman, and put them on the island of Ceylon. According to the account, it was the most beautiful island of which man can conceive. Such birds, such songs, such flowers, and such verdure! And the branches of the trees were so arranged that when the wind swept through them every tree was a thousand *Æolian* harps.

Brahma, when he put them there, said: "Let them have a period of courtship, for it is my desire and will that true love should for ever precede marriage." When I read that, it was so much more beautiful and lofty than the other that I said to myself: "If either one of these stories ever turns out to be true, I hope it will be this one."

Then they had their courtship, with the nightingale singing, and the stars shining, and the flowers blooming, and they fell in love. Imagine that courtship! No prospective fathers or mothers-in-law; no prying and gossiping neighbours; nobody to say: "Young man,

how do you expect to support her?" Nothing of that kind. They were married by the Supreme Brahma, and he said to them: "Remain here; you must never leave this island." Well, after a little while, the man—and his name was Adami, and the woman's name was Heva—said to Heva: "I believe I'll look about a little." He went to the northern extremity of the island, where there was a little narrow neck of land connecting it with the mainland; and the devil, who is always playing pranks with us, produced a mirage, and when he looked over to the mainland such hills and vales, such dells and dales, such mountains crowned with snow, such cataracts clad in bows of glory did he see there, that he went back and told Heva: "The country over there is a thousand times better than this; let us migrate." She, like every other woman that ever lived, said: "Let well enough alone; we have all we want; let us stay here." But he said: "No, let us go"; so she followed him, and when they came to this narrow neck of land he took her on his back like a gentleman, and carried her over. But the moment they got over they heard a crash, and, looking back, discovered that this narrow neck of land had fallen into the sea. The mirage had disappeared, and there was naught but rocks and sand; and then the Supreme Brahma cursed them both to the lowest hell.

Then it was that the man spoke—and I have liked him ever since for it: "Curse me, but curse not her; it was not her fault, it was mine."

That is the kind of man to start a world with.

The Supreme Brahma said: "I will save her, but not thee." And then she spoke out of her fulness of love, out of a heart in which there was love enough to make all her daughters rich in holy affection, and said: "If thou wilt not spare him, spare neither me; I do not wish to live without him; I love him." Then the Supreme Brahma said—and I

have liked him ever since I read it: "I will spare you both and watch over you and your children forever."

Honour bright, is not that the better and grander story?

And from that same book I want to show you what ideas some of these miserable heathen had—the heathen we are trying to convert. We send missionaries over yonder to convert heathen there, and we send soldiers out on the plains to kill heathen here. If we can convert the heathen, why not convert those nearest home? Why not convert those we can get at? Why not convert those who have the immense advantage of the example of the average pioneer? But to show you the men we are trying to convert: In this book it says: "Man is strength, woman is beauty; man is courage, woman is love. When the one man loves the one woman and the one woman loves the one man, the very angels leave heaven and come and sit in that house and sing for joy."

They are the men we are converting. Think of it! I will tell you, when I read these things, I say that love is not of any country; nobility does not belong exclusively to any race, and through all the ages there have been a few great and tender souls blossoming in love and pity.

In my judgment, the woman is the equal of the man. She has all the rights I have and one more, and that is the right to be protected. That is my doctrine. You are married; try and make the woman you love happy. Whoever marries simply for himself will make a mistake; but whoever loves a woman so well that he says "I will make her happy," makes no mistake. And so with the woman who says, "I will make him happy." There is only one way to be happy, and that is to make somebody else so, and you cannot be happy by going cross lots; you have got to go the regular turnpike road.

If there is any man I detest, it is the man who thinks he is the head of a family—the man who thinks he is "boss"!

The fellow in the dug-out used that word "boss"; that was one of his favourite expressions.

Imagine a young man and a young woman courting, walking out in the moonlight, and the nightingale singing a song of pain and love, as though the thorn touched her heart—imagine them stopping there in the moonlight and starlight and song, and saying, "Now, here, let us settle who is 'boss!'" I tell you it is an infamous word and an infamous feeling—I abhor a man who is "boss," who is going to govern in his family, and when he speaks orders all the rest to be still, as some mighty idea is about to be launched from his mouth. Do you know, I dislike this man unspeakably?

I hate above all things a cross man. What right has he to murder the sunshine of a day? What right has he to assassinate the joy of life? When you go home you ought to go like a ray of light—so that it will, even in the night, burst out of the doors and windows and illuminate the darkness. Some men think their mighty brains have been in a turmoil; they have been thinking about who will be alderman from the fifth ward; they have been thinking about politics; great and mighty questions have been engaging their minds; they have bought calico at five cents or six, and want to sell it for seven. Think of the intellectual strain that must have been upon that man, and when he gets home everybody else in the house must look out for his comfort. A woman who has only taken care of five or six children, and one or two of them sick, has been nursing them and singing to them, and trying to make one yard of cloth do the work of two, she, of course, is fresh and fine and ready to wait upon this gentleman—the head of the family—the boss!

Do you know another thing? I despise a stingy man. I do not see how it is possible for a man to die worth fifty million of dollars, or ten million of dollars, in a city full of want, when he meets almost every day the withered

hand of beggary and the white lips of famine. How a man can withstand all that, and hold in the clutch of his greed twenty or thirty million of dollars, is past my comprehension. I do not see how he can do it. I should not think he could do it any more than he could keep a pile of lumber on the beach where hundreds and thousands of men were drowning in the sea.

Do you know that I have known men who would trust their wives with their hearts and their honour, but not with their pocket-book; not with a dollar. When I see a man of that kind, I always think he knows which of these articles is the most valuable. Think of making your wife a beggar! Think of her having to ask you every day for a dollar, or for two dollars or fifty cents! "What did you do with that dollar I gave you last week?" Think of having a wife that is afraid of you! What kind of children do you expect to have with a beggar and a coward for their mother? Oh, I tell you if you have but a dollar in the world, and you have got to spend it, spend it like a king; spend it as though it were a dry leaf and you the owner of unbounded forests! That is the way to spend it! I had rather be a beggar and spend my last dollar like a king than be a king and spend my money like a beggar! If it has got to go, let it go!

Get the best you can for your family—try to look as well as you can yourself. When you used to go courting, how elegantly you looked! Ah, your eye was bright, your step was light, and you looked like a prince. Do you know that it is insufferable egotism in you to suppose a woman is going to love you always looking as slovenly as you can! Think of it! Any good woman on earth will be true to you forever when you do your level best.

Some people tell me, "Your doctrine about loving, and wives, and all that, is splendid for the rich, but it won't do for the poor." I tell you to-night there is more love in the homes of the poor than in the palaces of the rich. The

meanest hut with love in it is a palace fit for the gods, and a palace without love is a den only fit for wild beasts. That is my doctrine! You cannot be so poor that you cannot help somebody. Good nature is the cheapest commodity in the world; and love is the only thing that will pay ten per cent. to borrower and lender both. Do not tell me that you have got to be rich! We have a false standard of greatness in the United States. We think here that a man must be great, that he must be notorious; that he must be extremely wealthy, or that his name must be upon the putrid lips of rumour. It is all a mistake. It is not necessary to be rich, or to be great, or to be powerful, to be happy. The happy man is the successful man.

Happiness is the legal tender of the soul.

Joy is wealth.

A little while ago I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon—a magnificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a dead deity—and gazed upon the sarcophagus of rare and nameless marble where rest at last the ashes of that restless man. I leaned over the balustrade and thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world.

I saw him walking upon the banks of the Seine, contemplating suicide. I saw him at Toulon—I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris—I saw him at the head of the army of Italy—I saw him crossing the bridge of Lodi with the tri-colour in his hand—I saw him in Egypt in the shadows of the pyramids—I saw him conquer the Alps and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of the crags. I saw him at Marengo—at Ulm and Austerlitz. I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow and the cavalry of the wild blast scattered his legions like winter's withered leaves. I saw him at Leipsic in defeat and disaster—driven by a million bayonets back upon Paris—clutched like a wild beast—banished to Elba. I saw him escape and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him

upon the frightful field of Waterloo, where chance and fate combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king. And I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands crossed behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea.

I thought of the orphans and widows he had made—of the tears that had been shed for his glory, and of the only woman who ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition. And I said I would rather have been a French peasant and worn wooden shoes. I would rather have lived in a hut with a vine growing over the door, and the grapes growing purple in the kisses of the autumn sun. I would rather have been that poor peasant with my loving wife by my side, knitting as the day died out of the sky—with my children upon my knees and their arms about me—I would rather have been that man and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder known as "Napoleon the Great."

It is not necessary to be great to be happy; it is not necessary to be rich to be just and generous and to have a heart filled with divine affection. No matter whether you are rich or poor, treat your wife as though she were a splendid flower, and she will fill your life with perfume and with joy.

And do you know, it is a splendid thing to think that the woman you really love will never grow old to you. Through the wrinkles of time, through the mask of years, if you really love her, you will always see the face you loved and won. And a woman who really loves a man does not see that he grows old; he is not decrepit to her; he does not tremble; he is not old; she always sees the same gallant gentleman who won her hand and heart. I like to think of it in that way; I like to think that love is eternal. And to love in that way and then go down the hill of life together, and as you go down hear, perhaps, the laughter of grandchildren, while the birds of joy

and love sing once more in the leafless branches in the tree of age.

I believe in the fireside. I believe in the democracy of home. I believe in the republicanism of the family. I believe in liberty, equality, and love.

THE LIBERTY OF CHILDREN.

If women have been slaves, what shall I say of children—of the little children in alleys and sub-cellars; the little children who turn pale when they hear their father's footsteps; the little children who run away when they only hear their names called by the lips of a mother; little children—the children of poverty, the children of crime, the children of brutality, wherever they are—flotsam and jetsam upon the wild, mad sea of life? My heart goes out to them, one and all.

I tell you the children have the same rights that we have, and we ought to treat them as though they were human beings. They should be reared with love, with kindness, with tenderness, and not with brutality. That is my idea of children.

When your little child tells a lie, do not rush at him as though the world were about to go into bankruptcy. Be honest with him. A tyrant father will have liars for his children; do you know that? A lie is born of tyranny upon the one hand and weakness upon the other, and when you rush at a poor little boy with a club in your hand, of course he lies.

I thank thee, Mother Nature, that thou has put ingenuity enough in the brain of a child, when attacked by a brutal parent, to throw up a little breast-work in the shape of a lie.

When one of your children tells a lie, be honest with him; tell him that you have told hundreds of them yourself. Tell him it is not the best way; that you have tried it. Tell him, as the man did in Maine when his boy left home: "John, honesty is the best policy; I have tried both." Be honest with him. Suppose a man as much larger than you

as you are larger than a child five years old should come at you with a liberty pole in his hand, and in a voice of thunder shout, "Who broke that plate?" There is not a solitary one of you who would not swear you never saw it, or that it was cracked when you got it. Why not be honest with these children? Just imagine a man who deals in stocks whipping his boy for putting false rumours afloat! Think of a lawyer beating his own flesh and blood for evading the truth when he makes half of his own living that way! Think of a minister punishing his child for not telling all he thinks! Just think of it!

When your child commits a wrong, take it in your arms; let it feel your heart beat against its heart; let the child know that you really and truly and sincerely love it. Yet some Christians, good Christians, when a child commits a fault, drive it from the door and say: "Never do you darken this house again." Think of that! And then these same people will get down on their knees and ask God to take care of the child they have driven from home. I will never ask God to take care of my children unless I am doing my level best in that same direction.

But I will tell you what I say to my children: "Go where you will; commit what crime you may; fall to what depth of degradation you may; you can never commit any crime that will shut my door, my arms, or my heart to you. As long as I live you shall have one sincere friend."

Do you know that I have seen some people who acted as though they thought that when the Saviour said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," he had a raw-hide under his mantle, and made that remark simply to get the children within striking distance?

I do not believe in the government of the lash. If any one of you ever expects to whip your children again, I want you to have a photograph taken of yourself when you are in the act, with your face

red with vulgar anger, and the face of the little child, with eyes swimming in tears and the little chin dimpled with fear, like a piece of water struck by a sudden cold wind. Have the picture taken. If that little child should die, I cannot think of a sweeter way to spend an autumn afternoon than to go out to the cemetery, when the maples are clad in tender gold, and little scarlet runners are coming, like poems of regret, from the sad heart of the earth—and sit down upon the grave, and look at that photograph, and think of the flesh, now dust, that you beat. I tell you it is wrong; it is not the way to raise children. Make your home happy. Be honest with them. Divide fairly with them in everything.

Give them a little liberty and love, and you cannot drive them out of your house. They will want to stay there. Make home pleasant. Let them play any game they wish. Do not be so foolish as to say: "You may roll balls on the ground, but you must not roll them on a green cloth. You may knock them with a mallet, but you must not push them with a cue. You may play with little pieces of paper which have 'authors' written on them, but you must not have 'cards.'" Think of it! "You may go to a minstrel show where people blacken themselves and imitate humanity below them, but you must not go to a theatre and see the characters created by immortal genius put upon the stage." Why? Well, I cannot think of any reason in the world except "minstrel" is a word of two syllables, and "theatre" has three.

Let children have some daylight at home if you want to keep them there, and do not commence at the cradle and shout "Don't!" "Don't!" "Stop!" That is nearly all that is said to a child from the cradle until he is twenty-one years old, and when he comes of age other people begin saying "Don't!" And the Church says "Don't!" and the party he belongs to says "Don't!"

I despise that way of going through this world. Let us have liberty—just a

little. Call me infidel, call me atheist, call me what you will, I intend so to treat my children that they can come to my grave and truthfully say: "He who sleeps here never gave us a moment of pain. From his lips, now dust, never came to us an unkind word."

People justify all kinds of tyranny towards children upon the ground that they are totally depraved. At the bottom of ages of cruelty lies this infamous doctrine of total depravity. Religion contemplates a child as a living crime—heir to an infinite curse—doomed to eternal fire.

In the olden time they thought some days were too good for a child to enjoy himself. When I was a boy Sunday was considered altogether too holy to be happy in. Sunday used to commence then when the sun went down on Saturday night. When the sun fell below the horizon on Saturday evening there was a darkness fell upon the house ten thousand times deeper than that of night. Nobody said a pleasant word; nobody laughed; nobody smiled; the child that looked the sickest was regarded as the most pious. That night you could not even crack hickory nuts. If you were caught chewing gum, it was only another evidence of the total depravity of the human heart. It was an exceedingly solemn night. Dyspepsia was in the very air you breathed. Everybody looked sad and mournful. I have noticed all my life that many people think they have religion when they are troubled with dyspepsia. If there could be found an absolute specific for that disease, it would be the hardest blow the Church has ever received.

On Sunday morning the solemnity had simply increased. Then we went to church. The minister was in a pulpit about twenty feet high, with a little sounding-board above him, and he commenced at "firstly," and went on and on and on to about "twenty-thirdly." Then he made a few remarks by way of application; and then took a general

view of the subject, and in about two hours reached the last chapter in Revelation.

In those days, no matter how cold the weather was, there was no fire in the church. It was thought to be a kind of sin to be comfortable while you were thanking God. The first church that ever had a stove in it in New England divided on that account. So the first church in which they sang by note was torn in fragments.

After the sermon we had an intermission. Then came the catechism with the chief end of man. We went through with that. We sat in a row with our feet coming within about six inches of the floor. The minister asked us if we knew that we all deserved to go to hell, and we all answered "Yes." Then we were asked if we would be willing to go to hell if it was God's will, and every little liar shouted "Yes." Then the same sermon was preached once more, commencing at the other end and going back. After that we started for home, sad and solemn—overpowered with the wisdom displayed in the scheme of the Atonement. When we got home, if we had been good boys, and the weather was warm, sometimes they would take us out to the graveyard to cheer us up a little. It did cheer me. When I looked at the sunken tombs and the leaning stones, and read the half-effaced inscriptions through the moss of silence and forgetfulness, it was a great comfort. The reflection came to my mind that the observance of the Sabbath could not last always. Sometimes they would sing that beautiful hymn in which occur these cheerful lines:—

"Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths never end."

These lines, I think, prejudiced me a little against even heaven. Then we had good books that we read on Sundays by way of keeping us happy and contented. There were Milner's *History of the Waldenses*, Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, Yahn's *Archæology of the*

Jews, and Jenkyn's *On the Atonement*. I used to read Jenkyn's *On the Atonement*. I have often thought that an atonement would have to be exceedingly broad in its provisions to cover the case of a man who would write a book like that for a boy.

But at last the Sunday wore away, and the moment the sun went down we were free. Between three and four o'clock we would go out to see how the sun was coming on. Sometimes it seemed to me that it was stopping from pure meanness. But finally it went down. It had to. And when the last rim of light sank below the horizon, off would go our caps, and we would give three cheers for liberty once more.

Sabbaths used to be prisons. Every Sunday was a Bastile. Every Christian was a kind of turnkey, and every child was a prisoner—a convict. In that dungeon a smile was a crime.

It was thought wrong for a child to laugh upon this holy day. Think of that!

A little child would go out into the garden, and there would be a tree laden with blossoms, and the little fellow would lean against it, and there would be a bird on one of the boughs, singing and swinging, and thinking about four little speckled eggs, warmed by the breast of its mate—singing and swinging, and the music in happy waves rippling out of its tiny throat, and the flowers blossoming, the air filled with perfume and the great white clouds floating in the sky, and the little boy would lean up against that tree and think about hell and the worm that never dies.

I have heard them preach, when I sat in the pew and my feet did not touch the floor, about the final home of the unconverted. In order to impress upon the children the length of time they would probably stay if they settled in that country, the preacher would frequently give us the following illustration: "Suppose that once in a billion years a bird should come from some far-distant planet, and carry off in its little

bill a grain of sand, a time would finally come when the last atom composing this earth would be carried away; and when this last atom was taken, it would not even be sun up in hell." Think of such an infamous doctrine being taught to children!

The laugh of a child will make the holiest day more sacred still. Strike with hand of fire, O weird musician, thy harp strung with Apollo's golden hair; fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft toucher of the organ keys; blow, bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering 'mid the vine-clad hills. But know, your sweetest strains are discords all compared with childhood's happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light and every heart with joy. O rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary line between the beasts and men; and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fretful fiend of care. O Laughter, rose-lipped daughter of Joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.

And yet the minds of children have been polluted by this infamous doctrine of eternal punishment. I denounce it to-day as a doctrine the infamy of which no language is sufficient to express.

Where did that doctrine of eternal punishment for men and women and children come from? It came from the low and beastly skull of that wretch in the dug-out. Where did he get it? It was a souvenir from the animals. The doctrine of eternal punishment was born in the glittering eyes of snakes—snakes that hung in fearful coils watching for their prey. It was born of the howl and bark and growl of wild beasts. It was born of the grin of hyenas and of the depraved chatter of unclean baboons. I despise it with every drop of my blood. Tell me there is a God in the serene heavens that will damn his children for the expression of an honest belief! More men have died in their sins, judged by

your orthodox creeds, than there are leaves on all the forests in the wide world ten thousand times over. Tell me these men are in hell; that these men are in torment; that these children are in eternal pain, and that they are to be punished forever and forever! I denounce this doctrine as the most infamous of lies.

When the great ship containing the hopes and aspirations of the world, when the great ship freighted with mankind goes down in the night of death, chaos, and disaster, I am willing to go down with the ship. I will not be guilty of the ineffable meanness of paddling away in some orthodox canoe. I will go down with the ship, with those who love me, and with those whom I have loved. If there is a God who will damn his children forever, I would rather go to hell than go to heaven and keep the society of such an infamous tyrant. I make my choice now. I despise that doctrine. It has covered the cheeks of this world with tears. It has polluted the hearts of children, and poisoned the imaginations of men. It has been a constant pain, a perpetual terror to every good man and woman and child. It has filled the good with horror and with fear; but it has had no effect upon the infamous and base. It has wrung the hearts of the tender; it has furrowed the cheeks of the good. This doctrine never should be preached again. What right have you, sir, Mr. Clergyman, you, minister of the Gospel, to stand at the portals of the tomb, at the vestibule of eternity, and fill the future with horror and with fear? I do not believe this doctrine; neither do you. If you did, you could not sleep one moment. Any man who believes it, and has within his breast a decent, throbbing heart, will go insane. A man who believes that doctrine and does not go insane has the heart of a snake and the conscience of a hyena.

Jonathan Edwards, the dear old soul, who, if his doctrine is true, is now in heaven rubbing his holy hands with

glee as he hears the cries of the damned, preached this doctrine; and he said: "Can the believing husband in heaven be happy with his unbelieving wife in hell? Can the believing father in heaven be happy with his unbelieving children in hell? Can the loving wife in heaven be happy with her unbelieving husband in hell?" And he replies: "I tell you, yea. Such will be their sense of justice that it will increase rather than diminish their bliss." There is no wild beast in the jungles of Africa whose reputation would not be tarnished by the expression of such a doctrine.

These doctrines have been taught in the name of religion, in the name of universal forgiveness, in the name of infinite love and charity. Do not, I pray you, soil the minds of your children with this dogma. Let them read for themselves; let them think for themselves.

Do not treat your children like orthodox posts to be set in a row. Treat them like trees that need light and sun and air. Be fair and honest with them; give them a chance. Recollect that their rights are equal to yours. Do not have it in your mind that you must govern them; that they must obey. Throw away forever the idea of master and slave.

In old times they used to make the children go to bed when they were not sleepy, and get up when they were sleepy. I say let them go to bed when they are sleepy, and get up when they are not sleepy.

But you say, this doctrine will do for the rich, but not for the poor. Well, if the poor have to waken their children early in the morning, it is as easy to wake them with a kiss as with a blow. Give your children freedom; let them preserve their individuality. Let your children eat what they desire, and commence at the end of a dinner they like. That is their business, and not yours. They know what they wish to eat. If they are given their liberty from the first, they know what they want better than

any doctor in the world can prescribe. Do you know that all the improvement that has ever been made in the practice of medicine has been made by the recklessness of patients and not by the doctors? For thousands and thousands of years the doctors would not let a man suffering from fever have a drop of water. Water they looked upon as poison. But every now and then some man got reckless and said, "I had rather die than not to slack my thirst." Then he would drink two or three quarts of water and get well. And when the doctor was told of what the patient had done, he expressed great surprise that he was still alive, and complimented his constitution upon being able to bear such a frightful strain. The reckless men, however, kept on drinking the water, and persisted in getting well. And finally the doctors said: "In a fever, water is the very best thing you can take." So, I have more confidence in the voice of Nature about such things than I have in the conclusions of the medical schools.

Let your children have freedom, and they will fall into your ways; they will do substantially as you do; but if you try to make them, there is some magnificent, splendid thing in the human heart that refuses to be driven. And do you know that it is the luckiest thing that ever happened for this world that people are that way. What would have become of the people five hundred years ago if they had followed strictly the advice of the doctors? They would all have been dead. What would the people have been if at any age of the world they had followed implicitly the direction of the Church? They would all have been idiots. It is a splendid thing that there is always some grand man who will not mind, and who will think for himself.

I believe in allowing the children to think for themselves. I believe in the democracy of the family. If in this world there is anything splendid, it is a home where all are equals.

You will remember that only a few years ago parents would tell their children to "let their victuals stop their mouths." They used to eat as though it were a religious ceremony—a very solemn thing. Life should not be treated as a solemn matter. I like to see the children at table, and hear each one telling of the wonderful things he has seen or heard. I like to hear the clatter of knives and forks and spoons mingling with their happy voices. I had rather hear it than any opera that was ever put upon the boards. Let the children have liberty. Be honest and fair with them; be just, be tender, and they will make you rich in love and joy.

Men are oaks, women are vines, and children are flowers.

The human race has been guilty of almost countless crimes; but I have some excuse for mankind. This world, after all, is not very well adapted to raising good people. In the first place, nearly all of it is water. It is much better adapted to fish culture than to the production of folks. Of that portion which is land not one-eighth has suitable soil and climate to produce great men and women. You cannot raise men and women of genius without the proper soil and climate, any more than you can raise corn and wheat upon the ice fields of the Arctic sea. You must have the necessary conditions and surroundings. Man is a product; you must have the soil and food. The obstacles presented by nature must not be so great that man cannot, by reasonable industry and courage, overcome them. There is upon this world only a narrow belt of land, circling zig-zag the globe, upon which you can produce men and women of talent. In the southern hemisphere the real climate that man needs falls mostly upon the sea, and the result is that the southern half of our world has never produced a man or woman of great genius. In the far north there is no genius—it is too cold. In the far south there is no genius—it is too warm.

There must be winter, and there must be summer. In a country where man needs no coverlet but a cloud, revolution is his normal condition. Winter is the mother of industry and prudence. Above all, it is the mother of the family relation. Winter holds in its icy arms the husband and wife and the sweet children. If upon this earth we ever have a glimpse of heaven, it is when we pass a home in winter, at night, and through the windows, the curtains drawn aside, we see the family about the pleasant hearth; the old lady knitting; the cat playing with the yarn; the children wishing they had as many dolls or dollars or knives, or somethings, as there are sparks going out to join the roaring blast; the father reading and smoking, and the clouds rising like incense from the altar of domestic joy. I never passed such a house without feeling that I had received a benediction.

Civilisation, liberty, justice, charity, intellectual advancement, are all flowers that blossom in the drifted snow.

I do not know that I can better illustrate the great truth that only part of the world is adapted to the production of great men and women than by calling your attention to the difference between vegetation in valleys and upon mountains. In the valley you find the oak and elm tossing their branches defiantly to the storm, and as you advance up the mountain side the hemlock, the pine, the birch, the spruce, the fir, and finally you come to little dwarfed trees, that look like other trees seen through a telescope reversed—every limb twisted as though in pain—getting a scanty subsistence from the miserly crevices of the rocks. You go on and on, until at last the highest crag is freckled with a kind of moss, and vegetation ends. You might as well try to raise oaks and elms where the mosses grow as to raise great men and great women where their surroundings are unfavourable. You must have the proper climate and soil.

A few years ago we were talking about the annexation of Santo Domingo to this

country. I was in Washington at the time. I was opposed to it. I was told that it was a most delicious climate; that the soil produced everything. But I said: "We do not want it; it is not the right kind of country in which to raise American citizens. Such a climate would debauch us. You might go there with five thousand Congregational preachers, five thousand ruling elders, five thousand professors in colleges, five thousand of the solid men of Boston and their wives; settle them all in Santo Domingo, and you will see the second generation riding upon a mule, bareback, no shoes, a grape-vine bridle, hair sticking out at the top of their sombreros, with a rooster under each arm, going to a cock fight on Sunday." Such is the influence of climate.

Science, however, is gradually widening the area within which men of genius can be produced. We are conquering the north with houses, clothing, food, and fuel. We are in many ways overcoming the heat of the south. If we attend to this world instead of another, we may in time cover the land with men and women of genius.

I have still another excuse. I believe that man came up from the lower animals. I do not say this as a fact. I simply say I believe it to be a fact. Upon that question I stand about eight to seven, which, for all practical purposes, is very near a certainty. When I first heard of that doctrine I did not like it. My heart was filled with sympathy for those people who have nothing to be proud of except ancestors. I thought how terrible this will be upon the nobility of the Old World. Think of their being forced to trace their ancestry back to the Duke Orang Outang, or to the Princess Chimpanzee. After thinking it all over, I came to the conclusion that I liked that doctrine. I became convinced in spite of myself. I read about rudimentary bones and muscles. I was told that everybody had rudimentary muscles extending from the ear into the cheek. I asked: "What are they?" I

was told: "They are the remains of muscles, that they became rudimentary from lack of use; they went into bankruptcy. They are the muscles with which your ancestors used to flap their ears." I do not now so much wonder that we once had them as that we have outgrown them.

After all, I had rather belong to a race that started from the skulless vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas, vertebrates wiggling without knowing why they wiggled, swimming without knowing where they were going, but that in some way began to develop, and began to get a little higher and a little higher in the scale of existence; that came up by degrees through millions of ages through all the animal world, through all that crawls, and swims, and floats, and climbs, and walks, and finally produced the gentleman in the dug-out; and then from this man, getting a little grander, and each one below calling every one above him a heretic, calling every one who had made a little advance an infidel or an atheist—for in the history of this world the man who is ahead has always been called a heretic—I would rather come from a race that started from that skulless vertebrate, and came up and up and up, and finally produced Shakespeare, the man who found the human intellect dwelling in a hut, touched it with the wand of his genius, and it became a palace domed and pinnacled; Shakespeare, who harvested all the fields of dramatic thought, and from whose day to this there have been only gleaners of straw and chaff—I would rather belong to that race that commenced a skulless vertebrate and produced Shakespeare, a race that has before it an infinite future, with the angel of progress leaning from the far horizon, beckoning men forward, upward, and onward for ever—I had rather belong to such a race, commencing there, producing this, and with that hope, than to have sprung from a perfect pair upon which the Lord has lost money every moment from that day to this.

CONCLUSION.

I have given you my honest thought. Surely investigation is better than unthinking faith. Surely reason is a better guide than fear. This world should be controlled by the living, not by the dead. The grave is not a throne, and a corpse is not a king. Man should not try to live on ashes.

The theologians dead knew no more than the theologians now living. More than this cannot be said. About this world little is known—about another world, nothing.

Our fathers were intellectual serfs, and their fathers were slaves. The makers of our creeds were ignorant and brutal. Every dogma that we have has upon it the mark of whip, the rust of chain, and the ashes of faggot.

Superstition is the child of slavery. Freethought will give us truth. When all have the right to think and to express their thoughts, every brain will give to all the best it has. The world will then be filled with intellectual wealth.

As long as men and women are afraid of the Church, as long as a minister inspires fear, as long as people reverence a thing simply because they do not understand it, as long as it is respectable to lose your self-respect, as long as the Church has power, as long as mankind worship a book, just so long will the world be filled with intellectual paupers and vagrants, covered with the soiled and faded rags of superstition.

As long as woman regards the Bible as the charter of her rights, she will be the slave of man. The Bible was not written by a woman. Within its lids there is nothing but humiliation and shame for her. She is regarded as the property of man. She is made to ask forgiveness for becoming a mother. She is as much below her husband as her husband is below Christ. She is not allowed to speak. The Gospel is too pure to be spoken by her polluted lips. Woman should learn in silence.

In the Bible will be found no descrip-

tion of a civilised home. The free mother, surrounded by free and loving children, adored by a free man, her husband, was unknown to the inspired writers of the Bible. They did not believe in the democracy of home—in the republicanism of the fireside.

These inspired gentlemen knew nothing of the rights of children. They were the advocates of brute force—the disciples of the lash. They knew nothing of human rights. Their doctrines have brutalised the homes of millions, and filled the eyes of infancy with tears.

There has never been upon the earth a generation of free men and women. It is not yet time to write a creed. Wait until the chains are broken—until dungeons are not regarded as temples. Wait until solemnity is not mistaken for wisdom—until mental cowardice ceases to be known as reverence. Wait until the living are considered the equals of the dead—until the cradle takes precedence of the coffin. Wait until what we know can be spoken without regard to what others may believe. Wait until teachers take the place of preachers—until followers become investigators. Wait until the world is free before you write a creed.

In this creed there will be but one word—Liberty.

Oh, Liberty, float not for ever in the far horizon—remain not for ever in the dream of the enthusiast, the philanthropist, and poet, but come and make thy home among the children of men!

I know not what discoveries, what inventions, what thoughts, may leap from the brain of the world. I know not what garments of glory may be woven by the years to come. I cannot dream of the victories to be won upon the fields of thought; but I do know that, coming from the infinite sea of the future, there will never touch this “bank and shoal of time” a richer gift, a rarer blessing, than liberty for man, for woman, and for child.

A THANKSGIVING SERMON

MANY ages ago our fathers were living in dens and caves. Their bodies, their low foreheads, were covered with hair. They were eating berries, roots, bark, and vermin. They were fond of snakes and raw fish. They discovered fire, and, probably by accident, learned how to cause it by friction. They found how to warm themselves, to fight the frost and storm. They fashioned clubs and rude weapons of stone with which they killed the larger beasts, and now and then each other. Slowly, painfully, almost imperceptibly, they advanced. They crawled and stumbled, staggered and struggled, towards the light. To them the world was unknown. On every hand was the mysterious, the sinister, the hurtful. The forests were filled with monsters, and the darkness was crowded with ghosts, devils, and fiendish gods.

These poor wretches were the slaves of fear, the sport of dreams.

Now and then one rose a little above his fellows, used his senses, the little reason that he had, found something new, some better way. Then the people killed him, and afterwards knelt with reverence at his grave. Then another thinker gave his thought, was murdered, another tomb became sacred, another step was taken in advance. And so through countless years of ignorance and cruelty, of thought and crime, of murder and worship, of heroism, suffering, and self-denial, the race has reached the heights where now we stand.

Looking back over the long and devious roads that lie between the barbarism of the past and the civilisation of to-day, thinking of the centuries that rolled like waves between these distant shores, we can form some idea of what our fathers suffered, of the mistakes they made, some idea of their ignorance, their

stupidity, and some idea of their sense their goodness, their heroism.

It is a long road from the savage to the scientist, from a den to a mansion, from leaves to clothes, from a flickering rush to the arc-light, from a hammer of stone to the modern mill, a long distance from the pipe of Pan to the violin, to the orchestra, from a floating log to the steamship, from a sickle to a reaper, from a flail to a threshing machine, from a crooked stick to a plough, from a spinning wheel to a spinning jenny, from a hand loom to a Jacquard—a Jacquard that weaves fair forms and wondrous flowers beyond Arachne's utmost dream—from a few hieroglyphics on the skins of beasts, on bricks of clay, to a printing press, to a library; a long distance from the messenger, travelling on foot, to the electric spark, from knives and tools of stone to those of steel; a long distance from sand to telescopes, from echo to the phonograph—the phonograph that buries in indented lines and dots the sounds of living speech, and then gives back to life the very words and voices of the dead; a long way from the trumpet to the telephone—the telephone that transports speech as swift as thought and drops the words, perfect as minted coins, in listening ears; a long way from a fallen tree to the suspension bridge, from the dried sinews of beasts to the cables of steel, from the oar to the propeller, from the sling to the rifle, from the catapult to the cannon; a long distance from revenge to law, from the club to the legislature, from slavery to freedom, from appearance to fact, from fear to reason.

And yet the distance has been travelled by the human race. Countless obstructions have been overcome, numberless enemies have been conquered, thousands

and thousands of victories have been won for the right, and millions have lived, laboured, and died for their fellow-men.

For the blessings we enjoy, for the happiness that is ours, we ought to be grateful. Our hearts should blossom with thankfulness.

Whom, what, should we thank?

Let us be honest, generous.

Should we thank the Church?

Christianity has controlled Christendom for at least fifteen hundred years.

During these centuries what have the orthodox Churches accomplished for the good of man?

In this life man needs raiment and roof, food, and fuel. He must be protected from heat and cold, from snow and storm. He must take thought for the morrow. In the summer of youth he must prepare for the winter of age. He must know something of the causes of disease, of the conditions of health. If possible, he must conquer pain, increase happiness, and lengthen life. He must supply the wants of the body, and feed the hunger of the mind.

What good has the Church done?

Has it taught men to cultivate the earth, to build homes, to weave cloth, to cure or prevent disease, to build ships, to navigate the seas, to conquer pain, or to lengthen life?

Did Christ or any of his Apostles add to the sum of useful knowledge? Did they say one word in favour of any science, of any art? Did they teach their fellow-men how to make a living, how to overcome the obstructions of nature, how to prevent sickness, how to protect themselves from pain, from famine, from misery and rags?

Did they explain any of the phenomena of nature, any of the facts that affect the life of man? Did they say anything in favour of investigation, of study, of thought? Did they teach the gospel of self-reliance, of industry, of honest effort? Can any farmer, mechanic, or scientist find in the New Testament one useful fact? Is there any-

thing in the sacred book that can help the geologist, the astronomer, the biologist, the physician, the inventor, the manufacturer of any useful thing?

What has the Church done?

From the very first it taught the vanity, the worthlessness of all earthly things. It taught the wickedness of wealth, the blessedness of poverty. It taught that the business of this life was to prepare for death. It insisted that a certain belief was necessary to ensure salvation, and that all who failed to believe or doubted in the least would suffer eternal pain. According to the Church, the natural desires, ambitions, and passions of man were all wicked and depraved.

To love God, to practise self-denial, to overcome desire, to despise wealth, to hate prosperity, to desert wife and children, to live on roots and berries, to repeat prayers, to wear rags, to live in filth, and drive love from the heart—these, for centuries, were the highest and most perfect virtues, and those who practised them were saints.

The saints did not assist their fellow-men. Their fellow-men assisted them. They did not labour for others. They were beggars, parasites, vermin. They were insane. They followed the teachings of Christ. They took no thought for the morrow. They mutilated their bodies, seared their flesh, and destroyed their minds for the sake of happiness in another world. During the journey of life they kept their eyes on the grave. They gathered no flowers by the way, they walked in the dust of the road, avoided the green fields. Their moans made all the music they wished to hear. The babble of brooks, the songs of birds, the laughter of children, were nothing to them. Pleasure was the child of sin, and the happy needed a change of heart. They were sinless and miserable, but they had faith; they were pious and wretched, but they were limping towards heaven.

What has the Church done?

It has denounced pride and luxury, all things that adorn and enrich life, all

the pleasures of sense, the ecstasies of love, the happiness of the hearth, the clasp and kiss of wife and child.

And the Church has done this because it regarded this life as a period of probation, a time to prepare, to become spiritual, to overcome the natural, to fix the affections on the invisible, to become passionless, to subdue the flesh, to congeal the blood, to fold the wings of fancy, to become dead to the world, so that when you appeared before God you would be the exact opposite of what he made you.

What has the Church done?

It pretended to have a revelation from God. It knew the road to eternal joy, the way to death. It preached salvation by faith, and declared that only orthodox believers could become angels, and all doubters would be damned. It knew this, and so, knowing it, became the enemy of discussion, of investigation, of thought. Why investigate, why discuss, why think when you know? It sought to enslave the world. It appealed to force. It unsheathed the sword, lighted the faggot, forged the chain, built the dungeon, erected the scaffold, invented and used the instruments of torture. It branded, maimed, and mutilated, it imprisoned and tortured, it blinded and burned, hanged and crucified, and utterly destroyed millions and millions of human beings. It touched every nerve of the body, produced every pain that can be felt, every agony that can be endured.

And it did all this to preserve what it called the truth, to destroy heresy and doubt, and to save, if possible, the souls of a few. It was honest. It was necessary to prevent the development of the brain, to arrest all progress, and to do this the Church used all its power. If men were allowed to think and express their thoughts, they would fill their minds and the minds of others with doubts. If they were allowed to think, they would investigate, and then they might contradict the creed, dispute the words of priests, and defy the Church.

The priests cried to the people: "It is for us to talk. It is for you to hear. Our duty is to preach, and yours is to believe."

What has the Church done?

There have been thousands of councils and synods, thousands and thousands of occasions when the clergy have met and discussed and quarrelled, when popes and cardinals, bishops and priests, have added to or explained their creeds, and denied the rights of others. What useful truth did they discover? What fact did they find? Did they add to the intellectual wealth of the world? Did they increase the sum of knowledge?

I admit that they looked over a number of Jewish books and picked out the ones that Jehovah wrote.

Did they find the medicinal virtue that dwells in any weed or flower?

I know that they decided that the Holy Ghost was not created, not begotten, but that he proceeded.

Did they teach us the mysteries of the metals, and how to purify the ores in furnace flames?

They shouted: "Great is the mystery of Godliness."

Did they show us how to improve our condition in this world?

They informed us that Christ had two natures and two wills.

Did they give us even a hint as to any useful thing?

They gave us predestination, foreordination, and just enough "free will" to go to hell.

Did they discover or show us how to produce anything for food?

Did they produce anything to satisfy the hunger of man?

Instead of this they discovered that a peasant girl who lived in Palestine was the mother of God. This they proved by a book, and, to make the book evidence, they called it inspired.

Did they tell us anything about chemistry, how to combine and separate substances, how to subtract the hurtful, how to produce the useful?

They told us that bread, by making

certain motions, and mumbling certain prayers, could be changed into the flesh of God, and that in the same way wine could be changed to his blood. And this, notwithstanding the fact that God never had any flesh or blood, but has always been a spirit without body, parts, or passions.

What has the Church done?

It gave us the history of the world, of the stars, and the beginning of all things. It taught the geology of Moses, the astronomy of Joshua and Elijah. It taught the Fall of man and the Atonement, proved that a Jewish peasant was God, established the existence of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven.

It pretended to have a revelation from God, the Scriptures, in which could be found all knowledge, everything that man could need in the journey of life. Nothing outside of the inspired book, except legends and prayers, could be of any value. Books that contradicted the Bible were hurtful; those that agreed with it, useless. Nothing was of importance except faith, credulity, belief. The Church said: "Let philosophy alone, count your beads. Ask no questions, fall upon your knees. Shut your eyes and save your souls."

What has the Church done?

For centuries it kept the earth flat, for centuries it made all the hosts of heaven travel around this world, for centuries it clung to "sacred" knowledge and fought facts with the ferocity of a fiend. For centuries it hated the useful. It was the deadly enemy of medicine. Disease was produced by devils, and could be cured only by priests, decaying bones, and holy water. Doctors were the rivals of priests. They diverted the revenues.

The Church opposed the study of anatomy, was against the dissection of the dead. Man had no right to cure disease; God would do that through his priests.

Man had no right to prevent disease; diseases were sent by God as judgments.

The Church opposed inoculation, vaccination, and the use of chloroform

and ether. It was declared to be a sin, a crime for a woman to lessen the pangs of motherhood. The Church declared that woman must bear the curse of the merciful Jehovah.

What has the Church done?

It taught that the insane were inhabited by devils. Insanity was not a disease. It was produced by demons. It could be cured by prayers, gifts, amulets, and charms. All these had to be paid for. This enriched the Church. These ideas were honestly entertained by Protestants as well as Catholics, by Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Wesley.

What has the Church done?

It taught the awful doctrine of witchcraft. It filled the darkness with demons, the air with devils, and the world with grief and shame. It charged men, women, and children with being in league with Satan to injure their fellows. Old women were convicted for causing storms at sea, for preventing rain, and for bringing frost. Girls were convicted for having changed themselves into wolves, snakes, and toads. These witches were burned for causing diseases, for selling their souls, and for souring beer. All these things were done with the aid of the devil, who sought to persecute the faithful, the lambs of God. Satan sought in many ways to scandalise the Church. He sometimes assumed the appearance of a priest and committed crimes.

On one occasion he personated a bishop—a bishop renowned for his sanctity, allowed himself to be discovered and dragged from the room of a beautiful widow. So perfectly did he counterfeit the features and form of the bishop that many who were well acquainted with the prelate were actually deceived, and the widow herself thought her lover was the bishop. All this was done by the devil to bring reproach upon holy men.

Hundreds of like instances could be given, as the war waged between demons and priests was long and bitter.

These popes and priests, these clergymen, were not hypocrites. They believed

in the New Testament, in the teachings of Christ, and they knew that the principal business of the Saviour was casting out devils.

What has the Church done?

It made the wife a slave, the property of the husband, and it placed the husband as much above the wife as Christ was above the husband. It taught that a nun is purer, nobler than a mother. It induced millions of pure and conscientious girls to renounce the joys of life, to take the veil woven of night and death, to wear the habiliments of the dead, made them believe that they were the brides of Christ.

For my part, I would as soon be a widow as the bride of a man who had been dead for eighteen hundred years.

The poor deluded girls imagined that they, in some mysterious way, were in spiritual wedlock united with God. All worldly desires were driven from their hearts. They filled their lives with fastings, with prayers, with self-accusings. They forgot fathers and mothers, and gave their love to the invisible. They were the victims, the convicts of superstition, prisoners in the penitentiaries of God. Conscientious, good, sincere, insane.

These loving women gave their hearts to a phantom, their lives to a dream.

A few years ago, at a revival, a fine buxom girl was "converted," "born again." In her excitement she cried "I'm married to Christ, I'm married to Christ." In her delirium she threw her arms around the neck of an old man and again cried, "I'm married to Christ." The old man, who happened to be a kind of sceptic, gently removed her hands, saying at the same time: "I don't know much about your husband, but I have great respect for your father-in-law."

Priests, theologians, have taken advantage of women, of their gentleness, their love of approbation. They have lived upon their hopes and fears. Like vampires, they have sucked their blood. They have made them responsible for the sins of the world. They have taught

them the slave virtues—meekness, humility, implicit obedience. They have fed their minds with mistakes, mysteries, and absurdities. They have endeavoured to weaken and shrivel their brains, until, to them, there would be no possible connection between evidence and belief, between fact and faith.

What has the Church done?

It was the enemy of commerce, of business. It denounced the taking of interest for money. Without taking interest for money, progress is impossible. The steamships, the great factories, the railroads, have all been built with borrowed money—money on which interest was promised and for the most part paid.

The Church was opposed to fire insurance, to life insurance. It denounced insurance in any form as gambling, as immoral. To insure your life was to declare that you had no confidence in God—that you relied on a corporation instead of a divine providence. It was declared that God would provide for your widow and your fatherless children.

To insure your life was to insult Heaven.

What has the Church done?

The Church regarded epidemics as the messengers of the good God. The "Black Death" was sent by the eternal Father, whose mercy spared some, and whose justice murdered the rest. To stop the scourge they tried to soften the heart of God by kneelings and prostrations, by processions and prayers, by burning incense, and by making vows. They did not try to remove the cause. The cause was God. They did not ask for pure water, but for holy water. Faith and filth lived, or rather died, together. Religion and rags, piety and pollution, kept company.

Sanctity kept its odour.

What has the Church done?

It was the enemy of art and literature. It destroyed the marbles of Greece and Rome. Beauty was Pagan. It destroyed, so far as it could, the best literature of the world. It feared thought, but it preserved the Scriptures, the ravings

of insane saints, the falsehoods of the Fathers, the bulls of Popes, the accounts of miracles performed by shrines, by dried blood and faded hair, by pieces of bones and wood, by rusty nails and thorns, by handkerchiefs and rags, by water and beads, and by a finger of the Holy Ghost.

This was the literature of the Church.

I admit that the priests were honest, as honest as ignorant. More could not be said.

What has the Church done?

Christianity claims, with great pride, that it established asylums for the insane. Yes, it did. But the insane were treated as criminals. They were regarded as the homes, as the tenement houses of devils. They were persecuted and tormented. They were chained and flogged, starved and killed. The asylums were prisons, dungeons, the insane were victims, and the keepers were ignorant, conscientious, pious fiends. They were not trying to help men, they were fighting devils, destroying demons. They were not actuated by love, but by hate and fear.

What has the Church done?

It founded schools where facts were denied, where science was denounced, and philosophy despised. Schools, where priests were made, where they were taught to hate reason and to look upon doubts as the suggestions of the devil. Schools where the heart was hardened and the brain shrivelled. Schools in which lies were sacred and truths profane. Schools for the more general diffusion of ignorance, schools to prevent thought, to suppress knowledge. Schools for the purpose of enslaving the world. Schools in which teachers knew less than pupils.

What has the Church done?

It has used its influence with God to get rain and sunshine, to stop flood and storm, to kill insects, rats, snakes, and wild beasts, to stay pestilence and famine, to delay frost and snow, to lengthen the lives of kings and queens, to protect presidents, to give legislators wisdom, to increase collections and subscriptions.

In marriages it has made God the party of the third part. It has sprinkled water on babes when they were named. It has put oil on the dying, and repeated prayers for the dead. It has tried to protect the people from the malice of the devil, from ghosts and spooks, from witches and wizards, and all the leering fiends that seek to poison the souls of men. It has endeavoured to protect the sheep of God from the wolves of science from the wild beasts of doubt and investigation. It has tried to wean the lambs of the Lord from the delights, the pleasures, the joys of life. According to the philosophy of the Church, the virtuous weep and suffer, the vicious laugh and thrive, the good carry a cross, and the wicked fly. But in the next life this will be reversed. Then the good will be happy and the bad will be damned.

The Church filled the world with faith and crime.

It polluted the fountains of joy. It gave us an ignorant, jealous, revengeful and cruel God, sometimes merciful, sometimes ferocious. Now just, now infamous, sometimes wise, generally foolish. It gave us a devil, cunning, malicious, almost the equal of God, not quite as strong, but quicker; not as profound, but sharper.

It gave us angels with wings, cherubim and seraphim, and a heaven with harps and hallelujahs, with streets of gold and gates of pearl.

It gave us fiends and imps with wings like bats. It gave us ghosts and goblins, spooks and sprites, and little devils that swarmed in the bodies of men; and it gave us hell where the souls of men will roast in eternal flames. Shall we thank the Church? Shall we thank the orthodox Churches?

Shall we thank them for the hell they made here? Shall we thank them for the hell of the future?

II.

We must remember that the Church was founded and has been protected by God, that all the popes and cardinals, all

the bishops, priests, and monks, all the ministers and exhorters, were selected and set apart, all sanctified and enlightened by the infinite God, that the Holy Scriptures were inspired by the same Being, and that all the orthodox creeds were really made by Him.

We know what these men, filled with the Holy Ghost, have done. We know the part they have played. We know the souls they have saved and the bodies they have destroyed. We know the consolation they have given and the pain they have inflicted, the lies they have defended, the truths they have denied. We know that they convinced millions that celibacy is the greatest of all virtues, that women are perpetual temptations, the enemies of true holiness, that monks and priests are nobler than fathers, that nuns are purer than mothers. We know that they taught the blessed absurdity of the Trinity, that God once worked at the trade of a carpenter in Palestine. We know that they divided knowledge into sacred and profane, taught that Revelation was sacred, that reason was blasphemous, that faith was holy and facts false; that the sin of Adam and Eve brought disease and pain, vice and death, into the world. We know that they have taught the dogma of Special Providence, that all events are ordered and regulated by God, that he crowns and uncrowns kings, preserves and destroys, guards and kills; that it is the duty of man to submit to the divine will, and that no matter how much evil there may be, no matter how much suffering, how much pain and death, man should pour out his heart in thankfulness that it is no worse.

Let me be understood. I do not say, and I do not think, that the Church was dishonest, that the clergy were insincere. I admit that all religions, all creeds, all priests, have been naturally produced. I admit, and cheerfully admit, that the believers in the supernatural have done some good, not because they believed in gods and devils, but in spite of it.

I know that thousands and thousands

of clergymen are honest, self-denying, and humane; that they are doing what they believe to be their duty, doing what they can to induce men and women to live pure and noble lives. This is not the result of their creeds; it is because they are human.

What I say is that every honest teacher of the supernatural has been, and is, an unconscious enemy of the human race.

What is the philosophy of the Church, of those who believe in the supernatural?

Back of all that is, back of all events, Christians put an infinite Juggler, who, with a wish, creates, preserves, destroys. The world is his stage, and mankind his puppets. He fills them with wants and desires, with appetites and ambitions, with hopes and fears, with love and hate. He touches the springs. He pulls the strings, baits the hooks, sets the traps, and digs the pits.

The play is a continual performance.

He watches these puppets as they struggle and fail, sees them outwit each other and themselves, leads them to every crime, watches the births and deaths, hears lullabies at cradles and the fall of clods on coffins. He has no pity. He enjoys the tragedies, the desperation, the despair, the suicides. He smiles at the murders, the assassinations, the seductions, the desertions, the abandoned babes of shame. He sees the weak enslaved, mothers robbed of babes, the innocent in dungeons, on scaffolds. He sees crime crowned and hypocrisy robed.

He withholds the rain, and his puppets starve. He opens the earth, and they are devoured. He sends the flood, and they are drowned. He empties the volcano, and they perish in fire. He sends the cyclone, and they are torn and mangled. With quick lightnings they are dashed to death. He fills the air and water with the invisible enemies of life, the messengers of pain, and watches the puppets as they breathe and drink. He creates cancers to feed upon their flesh, their quivering nerves; serpents to

fill their veins with venom, beasts to crunch their bones, to lap their blood.

Some of the poor puppets he makes insane, makes them struggle in the darkness with imagined monsters with glaring eyes and dripping jaws; and some are made without the flame of thought, to drool and drivel through the darkened days. He sees all the agony, the injustice, the rags of poverty, the withered hands of want, the motherless babes, the deformed, the maimed, the leprous; knows the tears that flow, hears the sobs and moans, sees the gleam of swords, hears the roar of the guns, sees the fields reddened with blood, the white faces of the dead. But he mocks when their fear cometh, and at their calamity he fills the heavens with laughter. And the poor puppets who are left alive fall on their knees and thank the Juggler with all their hearts.

But, after all, the gods have not supported the children of men—men have supported the gods. They have built the temples. They have sacrificed their babes, their lambs, their cattle. They have drenched the altars with blood. They have given their silver, their gold, their gems. They have fed and clothed their priests, but the gods have given nothing in return. Hidden in the shadows, they have answered no prayer, heard no cry, given no sign, extended no hand, uttered no word. Unseen and unheard they have sat on their thrones, deaf and dumb, paralysed and blind. In vain the steeples rise, in vain the prayers ascend.

And think what man has done to please the gods. He has renounced his reason, extinguished the torch of his brain; he has believed without evidence and against evidence. He has slandered and maligned himself. He has fasted and starved. He has mutilated his body, scarred his flesh, given his blood to vermin. He has persecuted, imprisoned, and destroyed his fellows. He has deserted wife and child. He has lived alone in the desert. He has swung censers and burned incense, counted

beads and sprinkled himself with holy water, shut his eyes, clasped his hands, fallen upon his knees and grovelled in the dust; but the gods have been silent—silent as stones.

Have these cringings and crawlings, these cruelties and absurdities, this faith and foolishness, pleased the gods?

We do not know.

Has any disaster been averted, any blessing obtained? We do not know.

Shall we thank these gods?

Shall we thank the Church's God?

Who and what is he?

They say that he is the creator and preserver of all that has been, of all that is, of all that will be; that he is the father of angels and devils, the architect of heaven and hell, that he made the earth, a man and woman, that he made the serpent who tempted them, made his own rival, gave victory to his own enemy; that he repented of what he had done, that he sent a flood and destroyed all of the children of men with the exception of eight persons, that he tried to civilise the survivors and their children, tried to do this with earthquakes and fiery serpents, with pestilence and famine; but he failed. He intended to fail. Then he was born into the world, preached for three years, and allowed some savages to kill him. Then he rose from the dead and went back to heaven.

He knew that he would fail, knew that he would be killed. In fact, he arranged everything himself, and brought everything to pass just as he had predestined it, an eternity before the world was. All who believe these things will be saved, and they who doubt or deny will be lost.

Has this God good sense?

Not always. He creates his own enemies and plots against himself. Nothing lives, except in accordance with his will, and yet the devils do not die.

What is the matter with this God? Well, sometimes he is foolish, sometimes he is cruel, and sometimes he is insane.

Does this God exist? Is there any intelligence back of Nature? Is there any Being anywhere among the stars

who pities the suffering children of men?

We do not know.

Shall we thank Nature?

Does Nature care for us more than for leaves, or grass, or flies?

Does Nature know that we exist? We do not know.

But we do know that Nature is going to murder us all.

Why should we thank Nature? If we thank God or Nature for the sunshine and rain, for health and happiness, whom shall we curse for famine and pestilence, for earthquake and cyclone, for disease and death?

III.

If we cannot thank the orthodox Churches, if we cannot thank the unknown, the incomprehensible, the supernatural, if we cannot thank Nature, if we cannot kneel to a Guess, or prostrate ourselves before a Perhaps, whom shall we thank?

Let us see what the worldly have done, what has been accomplished by those not "called," not "set apart," not "inspired," not filled with the Holy Ghost, by those who were neglected by all the gods.

Passing over the Hindus, the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, their poets, philosophers, and metaphysicians, we will come to modern times.

In the tenth century after Christ the Saracens, governors of a vast empire, "established colleges in Mongolia, Tartary, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Morocco, Fez, and in Spain." The region owned by the Saracens was greater than the Roman Empire. "They had not only colleges, but observatories. The sciences were taught. They introduced the ten numerals, taught algebra and trigonometry, understood cubic equations, knew the art of surveying; they made catalogues and maps of the stars, gave the great stars the names they still bear; they ascertained the size of the earth, determined the obliquity of the ecliptic, and fixed the length of the year. They

calculated eclipses, equinoxes, solstices, conjunctions of planets, and occultations of stars. They constructed astronomical instruments. They made clocks of various kinds, and were the inventors of the pendulum. They originated chemistry, discovered sulphuric acid, nitric acid, and alcohol.

"They were the first to publish pharmacopœias and dispensatories.

"In mechanics they determined the laws of falling bodies. They understood the mechanical powers, and the attraction of gravitation.

"They taught hydrostatics and determined the specific gravities of bodies.

"In optics they discovered that a ray of light did not proceed from the eye to an object, but from the object to the eye."

They were manufacturers of cotton, leather, paper, and steel. "They gave us the game of chess." They produced romances, and novels, and essays on many subjects.

"In their schools they taught the modern doctrines of evolution and development." They anticipated Darwin and Spencer.

These people were not Christians. They were the followers, for the most part, of an impostor, of a pretended prophet, of a false god. And yet, while the true Christians, the men selected by the true God, and filled with the Holy Ghost, were tearing out the tongues of heretics, these wretches were irreverently tracing the orbits of the stars. While the true believers were flaying philosophers and extinguishing the eyes of thinkers, these godless followers of Mohammed were founding colleges, collecting manuscripts, investigating the facts of nature, and giving their attention to science. Afterwards the followers of Mohammed became the enemies of science, and hated facts as intensely and honestly as Christians. Whoever has a revelation from God will defend it with all his strength, will abhor reason and deny facts.

But it is well to know that we are indebted to the Moors, to the followers of

Mohammed, for having laid the foundations of modern science. It is well to know that we are not indebted to the Church, to Christianity, for any useful fact.

It is well to know that the seeds of thought were sown in our minds by the Greeks and Romans, and that our literature came from those seeds. The great literature of our language is Pagan in its thought, Pagan in its beauty, Pagan in its perfection. It is well to know that, when Mohammedans were the friends of science, Christians were its enemies. How consoling is it to think that the friends of science, the men who educated their fellows, are now in hell, and that the men who persecuted and killed philosophers are now in heaven! Such is the justice of God.

The Christians of the Middle Ages, the men who were filled with the Holy Ghost, knew all about the worlds beyond the grave, but nothing about the world in which they lived. They thought the earth was flat, that it was about five thousand years old, and that the stars were little sparkles made to beautify the night.

The fact is that Christianity was in existence for fifteen hundred years before there was an astronomer in Christendom. No follower of Christ knew the shape of the earth.

The earth was demonstrated to be a globe, not by a pope or cardinal, not by a collection of clergymen, not by the "called" or the "set apart," but by a sailor. Magellan left Seville, Spain, August 10th, 1519, sailed west, and kept sailing west, and the ship reached Seville, the port it left, on September 7th, 1522.

The world had been circumnavigated. The earth was known to be round. There had been a dispute between the Scriptures and a sailor. The fact took the sailor's side.

In 1543 Copernicus published his book, *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*.

He had some idea of the vastness of

the stars, of the astronomical spaces, of the insignificance of this world.

Towards the close of the 16th century Bruno, one of the greatest men the world has produced, gave his thoughts to his fellow-men. He taught the plurality of worlds. He was a Pantheist, an Atheist, an honest man. He called the Catholic Church the "Triumphant Beast." He was imprisoned for many years, tried, convicted, and on February 16th, 1600, burned in Rome by men filled with the Holy Ghost—burned on the spot where now his monument rises. Bruno, the noblest, the greatest of all the martyrs. The only one who suffered death for what he believed to be the truth. The only martyr who had no heaven to gain, no hell to shun, no God to please. He was nobler than inspired men, grander than prophets, greater and purer than Apostles. Above all the theologians of the world, above the makers of creeds, above the founders of religions, rose this serene, unselfish, and intrepid man.

Yet Christians, followers of Christ, murdered this incomparable man. These Christians were true to their creed. They believed that faith would be rewarded with eternal joy, and doubt punished with eternal pain. They were logical. They were pious and pitiless, devout and devilish, meek and malicious, religious and revengeful, Christ-like, and cruel, loving with their mouths, and hating with their hearts. And yet, honest victims of ignorance and fear.

What have the worldly done?

In 1608 Lippersheim, a Hollander, so arranged lenses that objects were exaggerated.

He invented the telescope.

He gave countless worlds to our eyes, and made us citizens of the Universe.

In 1610, on the night of January 7th, Galileo demonstrated the truth of the Copernican system, and in 1632 published his work on *The System of the World*.

What did the Church do?

Galileo was arrested, imprisoned,

forced to fall upon his knees, put his hand on the Bible, and recant. For ten years he was kept in prison—for ten years, until released by the pity of Death. Then the Church, men filled with the Holy Ghost, denied his body burial in consecrated ground. It was feared that his dust might corrupt the bodies of those who had persecuted him.

In 1609 Kepler published his book, *Motions of the Planet Mars*. He, too, knew of the attraction of gravitation, and that it acted in proportion to mass and distance. Kepler announced his Three Laws. He found and mathematically expressed the relation of distance, mass, and motion. Nothing greater has been accomplished by the human mind.

Astronomy became a science, and Christianity a superstition.

Then came Newton, Herschel, and Laplace. The astronomy of Joshua and Elijah faded from the minds of intelligent men, and Jehovah became an ignorant tribal god.

Men began to see that the operations of Nature were not subject to interference; that eclipses were not caused by the wrath of God; that comets had nothing to do with the destruction of empires or the death of kings; that the stars wheeled in their orbits without regard to the actions of men. In the sacred East the dawn appeared.

What have the worldly done?

A few years ago a few men became wicked enough to use their senses. They began to look and listen. They began to really see, and then they began to reason. They forgot heaven and hell long enough to take some interest in this world. They began to examine soils and rocks. They noticed what had been done by rivers and seas. They found out something about the crust of the earth. They found that most of the rocks had been deposited and stratified in the water—rocks 70,000 feet in thickness. They found that the coal was once vegetable matter. They made the best calculations they could of the time required to make the coal, and concluded

that it must have taken at least six or seven millions of years. They examined the chalk cliffs, found that they were composed of the microscopic shells of minute organisms—that is to say, the dust of these shells. This dust settled over areas as large as Europe, and in some places the chalk is a mile in depth. This must have required many millions of years.

Lyell, the highest authority on the subject, says that it must have required, to cause the changes that we know, at least two hundred million years. Think of these vast deposits caused by the slow falling of infinitesimal atoms of impalpable dust through the silent depths of ancient seas! Think of the microscopical forms of life, constructing their minute houses of lime, giving life to others, leaving their mansions beneath the waves, and so, through countless generations, building the foundations of continents and islands.

Go back of all life that we now know, back of all the flying lizards, the armoured monsters, the hissing serpents, the winged and fanged horrors, back to the Laurentian rocks, to the eozoön, the first of living things that we have found, back of all mountains, seas, and rivers, back to the first incrustation of the molten world, back of wave, of fire, and robe of flame, back to the time when all the substance of the earth blazed in the glowing sun with all the stars that wheel about the central fire.

Think of the days and nights that lie between! Think of the centuries, the withered leaves of time, that strew the desert of the past!

Nature does not hurry. Time cannot be wasted, cannot be lost. The future remains eternal, and all the past is as though it had not been, as though it were to be. The infinite knows neither loss nor gain.

We know something of the history of the world, something of the human race; and we know that man has lived and struggled through want and war, through pestilence and famine, through ignorance

and crime, through fear and hope, on the old earth for millions and millions of years.

At last we know that infallible popes, and countless priests and clergymen, who had been "called," filled with the Holy Ghost, and presidents of colleges, kings, emperors, and executives of nations, had mistaken the blundering guesses of ignorant savages for the wisdom of an infinite God.

At last we know that the story of creation, of the beginning of things, as told in the "sacred book," is not only untrue, but utterly absurd and idiotic. Now we know that the inspired writers did not know, and that the God who inspired them did not know.

We are no longer misled by myths and legends. We rely upon facts. The world is our witness, and the stars testify for us.

What have the worldly done?

They have investigated the religions of the world, have read the sacred books, the prophecies, the commandments, the rules of conduct. They have studied the symbols, the ceremonies, the prayers, and sacrifices. And they have shown that all religions are substantially the same, produced by the same causes, that all rest on a misconception of the facts in nature, that all are founded on ignorance and fear, on mistake and mystery.

They have found that Christianity is like the rest, that it was not a revelation, but a natural growth, that its gods and devils, its heavens and hells, were borrowed, that its ceremonies and sacraments were souvenirs of other religions, that no part of it came from heaven, but that it was all made by savage man. They found that Jehovah was a tribal god, and that his ancestors had lived on the banks of the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Ganges, and the Nile, and these ancestors were traced back to still more savage forms.

They found that all the sacred books were filled with inspired mistake and sacred absurdity.

But, say the Christians, we have the

only inspired book. We have the Old Testament and the New. Where did you get the Old Testament? From the Jews? Yes.

Let me tell you about it.

After the Jews returned from Babylon, about 400 years before Christ, Ezra commenced making the Bible. You will find an account of this in the Bible.

We know that Genesis was written after the Captivity, because it was from the Babylonians that the Jews got the story of the Creation, of Adam and Eve, of the Garden, of the Serpent, and the tree of life, of the flood, and from them they learned about the Sabbath.

You find nothing about that holy day in Judges, Joshua, Samuel, Kings, or Chronicles, nothing in Job, the Psalms, in Esther, Solomon's Song, or Ecclesiastes. Only in books written by Ezra after the return from Babylon.

When Ezra finished the inspired book he placed it in the temple. It was written on the skins of beasts, and, so far as we know, there was but one.

What became of this Bible?

Jerusalem was taken by Titus about seventy years after Christ. The temple was destroyed, and, at the request of Josephus, the Holy Bible was sent to Vespasian, the Emperor, at Rome.

And this Holy Bible has never been seen or heard of since. So much for that.

Then there was a copy, or rather a translation, called the Septuagint.

How was that made?

It is said that Ptolemy Soter, and his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, obtained a translation of the Jewish Bible. This translation was made by seventy persons.

At that time the Jewish Bible did not contain Daniel, Ecclesiastes, but few of the Psalms, and only a part of Isaiah.

What became of this translation known as the Septuagint?

It was burned in the Bruchium Library 47 years before Christ.

Then there was another so-called copy of part of the Bible, known as the Samaritan Roll of the Pentateuch.

But this is not considered of any value.

Have we a true copy of the Bible that was in the temple at Jerusalem, the one sent to Vespasian?

Nobody knows.

Have we a true copy of the Septuagint?

Nobody knows.

What is the oldest manuscript of the Bible we have in Hebrew?

The oldest manuscript we have in Hebrew was written in the tenth century after Christ. The oldest pretended copy we have of the Septuagint written in Greek was made in the fifth century after Christ.

If the Bible was divinely inspired, if it was the actual word of God, we have no authenticated copy. The original has been lost, and we are left in the darkness of Nature.

It is impossible for us to show that our Bible is correct. We have no standard. Many of the books in our Bible contradict each other. Many chapters appear to be incomplete, and parts of different books are written in the same words, showing that both could not have been original. The 19th and 20th chapters of 2nd Kings and the 37th and 38th chapters of Isaiah are exactly the same. So is the 36th chapter of Isaiah from the 2nd verse the same as the 18th chapter of 2nd Kings from the 2nd verse.

So, it is perfectly apparent that there could have been no possible propriety in inspiring the writers of Kings and the writers of Chronicles. The books are substantially the same, differing in a few mistakes, in a few falsehoods. The same is true of Leviticus and Numbers. The books do not agree either in facts or philosophy. They differ as the men differed who wrote them.

What have the worldly done?

They have investigated the phenomena of nature. They have invented ways to use the forces of the world, the weight of falling water, of moving air. They have changed water to steam, invented engines, the tireless giants that work for man. They have made lightning a

messenger and slave. They invented movable type, taught us the art of printing, and made it possible to save and transmit the intellectual wealth of the world. They connected continents with cables, cities and towns with the telegraph, brought the world into one family, made intelligence independent of distance. They taught us how to build homes, to obtain food, to weave cloth. They covered the seas with iron ships, and the land with roads and steeds of steel. They gave us the tools of all the trades, the implements of labour. They chiselled statues, painted pictures, and "witched the world" with form and colour. They have found the cause of, and the cure for, many maladies that afflict the flesh and minds of men. They have given us the instruments of music, and the great composers and performers have changed the common air to tones and harmonies that intoxicate, exalt, and purify the soul.

They have rescued us from the prisons of fear, and snatched our souls from the fangs and claws of superstition's loathsome, crawling, flying beasts. They have given us the liberty to think, and the courage to express our thoughts. They have changed the frightened, the enslaved, the kneeling, the prostrate, into men and women; clothed them in their right minds, and made them truly free. They have uncrowned the phantoms, wrested the sceptres from the ghosts, and given this world to the children of men. They have driven from the heart the fiends of fear, and extinguished the flames of hell.

They have read a few leaves of the great volume, deciphered some of the records written on stone by the tireless hands of time in the dim past. They have told us something of what has been done by wind and wave, by fire and frost, by life and death, the ceaseless workers, the pauseless forces of the world.

They have enlarged the horizon of the known, changed the glittering specks that shine above us to wheeling worlds, and filled all space with countless suns.

They have found the qualities of substances, the nature of things, how to analyse, separate, and combine, and have enabled us to use the good and avoid the hurtful.

They have given us mathematics in the higher forms, by means of which we measure the astronomical spaces, the distances to stars, the velocity at which the heavenly bodies move, their density and weight, and by which the mariner navigates the waste and trackless seas. They have given us all we have of knowledge, of literature, and art. They have made life worth living. They have filled the world with conveniences, comforts, and luxuries.

All this has been done by the worldly, by those who were not "called" or "set apart," or filled with the Holy Ghost, or had the slightest claim to "apostolic succession." The men who accomplished these things were not "inspired." They had no revelation, no supernatural aid. They were not clad in sacred vestments, and tiaras were not upon their brows. They were not even ordained. They used their senses, observed and recorded facts. They had confidence in reason. They were patient searchers for the truth. They turned their attention to the affairs of this world. They were not saints. They were sensible men. They worked for themselves, for wife and child, and for the benefit of all.

To these men we are indebted for all we are, for all we know, for all we have. They were the creators of civilisation, the founders of free States, the saviours of liberty, the destroyers of superstition, and the great captains in the army of progress.

IV.

Whom shall we thank? Standing here at the close of the nineteenth century, amid the trophies of thought, the triumphs of genius, here under the flag of the Great Republic, knowing something of the history of man, here on this day that has been set apart for thanksgiving, I most reverently thank

the good men, the good women of the past, I thank the kind fathers, the loving mothers of the savage days. I thank the father who spoke the first gentle word, the mother who first smiled upon her babe. I thank the first true friend. I thank the savages who hunted and fished that they and their babes might live. I thank those who cultivated the ground, and changed the forests into farms; those who built rude homes and watched the faces of their happy children in the glow of fireside flames; those who domesticated horses, cattle, and sheep; those who invented wheels and looms, and taught us to spin and weave; those who, by cultivation, changed wild grasses into wheat and corn, changed bitter things to fruit and worthless weeds to flowers, that sowed within our souls the seeds of Art. I thank the poets of the dawn, the tellers of legends, the makers of myths, the singers of joy and grief, of hope and love. I thank the artists who chiselled forms in stone, and wrought with light and shade the face of man. I thank the philosophers, the thinkers, who taught us how to use our minds in the great search for truth. I thank the astronomers who explored the heavens, told us the secrets of the stars, the glories of the constellations; the geologists, who found the story of the world in fossil forms, in memoranda kept in ancient rocks, in lines written by waves, by frost, and fire; the anatomists, who sought in muscle, nerve, and bone for all the mysteries of life; the chemists, who unravelled Nature's work that they might learn her art; the physicians, who have laid the hand of science on the brow of pain, the hand whose magic touch restores; the surgeons, who have defeated Nature's self and forced her to preserve the lives of those she laboured to destroy.

I thank the discoverers of chloroform and ether, the two angels who give to their beloved sleep, and wrap the throbbing brain in the soft robes of dreams. I thank the great inventors, those who gave us movable type and the press, by

means of which great thoughts and all discovered facts are made immortal, the inventors of engines, of the great ships, of the railways, the cables, and telegraphs. I thank the great mechanics, the workers in iron and steel, in wood and stone. I thank the inventors and makers of the numberless things of use and luxury.

I thank the industrious men, the loving mothers, the useful women. They are the benefactors of our race.

The inventor of pins did a thousand times more good than all the popes and cardinals, the bishops and priests—than all the clergymen and parsons, exhorters, and theologians that ever lived.

The inventor of matches did more for the comfort and convenience of mankind than all the founders of religions and the makers of all creeds, than all malicious monks and selfish saints.

I thank the honest men and women who have expressed their sincere thoughts, who have been true to themselves, and have preserved the veracity of their souls.

I thank the thinkers of Greece and Rome, Zeno and Epicurus, Cicero and Lucretius. I thank Bruno, the bravest, and Spinoza, the subtlest of men.

I thank Voltaire, whose thought lighted a flame in the brain of man, unlocked the doors of superstition's cells, and gave liberty to many millions of his fellow-men. Voltaire, a name that sheds light. Voltaire, a star that superstition's darkness cannot quench.

I thank the great poets, the dramatists. I thank Homer and Æschylus, and I thank Shakespeare above them all. I thank Burns for the heart-throbs he changed into songs, for his lyrics of flame. I thank Shelley for his "Skylark," Keats for his "Grecian Urn," and Byron for his "Prisoner of Chillon." I thank the great novelists. I thank the great sculptors. I thank the unknown man who moulded and chiselled the Venus de Milo. I thank the great painters. I thank Rembrandt and Corot. I thank all who have adorned, enriched, and ennobled life, all who have created the

great, the noble, the heroic, and artistic ideals.

I thank the statesmen who have preserved the rights of man. I thank Paine, whose genius sowed the seeds of independence in the hearts of '76. I thank Jefferson, whose mighty words for liberty have made the circuit of the globe. I thank the founders, the defenders, the saviours of the Republic. I thank Ericsson, the greatest mechanic of his century, for the monitor. I thank Lincoln for the Proclamation. I thank Grant for his victories, and the vast host that fought for the right, for the freedom of man. I thank them all, the living and the dead.

I thank the great scientists, those who have reached the foundation, the bed-rock, who have built upon facts; the great scientists, in whose presence theologians look silly and feel malicious.

The scientists never persecuted, never imprisoned their fellow-men. They forged no chains, built no dungeons, erected no scaffolds, tore no flesh with red-hot pincers, dislocated no joints on racks, crushed no bones in iron boots, extinguished no eyes, tore out no tongues, and lighted no faggots. They did not pretend to be inspired, did not claim to be prophets or saints, or to have been born again. They were only intelligent and honest men. They did not appeal to force or fear. They did not regard men as slaves to be ruled by torture, by lash, and chain, nor as children to be cheated with illusions, rocked in the cradle of an idiot creed, and soothed by a lullaby of lies.

They did not wound; they healed. They did not kill; they lengthened life. They did not enslave; they broke the chains and made men free. They sowed the seeds of knowledge, and many millions have reaped, are reaping, and will reap the harvest of joy.

I thank Humboldt, and Helmholtz, and Haeckel, and Büchner. I thank Lamarck and Darwin—Darwin who revolutionised the thought of the intellectual world. I thank Huxley and

Spencer. I thank the scientists, one and all.

I thank the heroes, the destroyers of prejudice and fear, the dethroners of savage gods, the extinguishers of hate's eternal fire, the heroes, the breakers of chains, the founders of free States, the makers of just laws, the heroes who

fought and fell on countless fields, the heroes whose dungeons became shrines, the heroes whose blood made scaffolds sacred, the heroes, the apostles of reason, the disciples of truth, the soldiers of freedom, the heroes who held high the holy torch and filled the world with light.

With all my heart I thank them all.

THE GHOSTS

LET THEM COVER THEIR EYELESS
 SOCKETS WITH THEIR FLESHLESS HANDS
 AND FADE FOREVER FROM THE IMAGINA-
 TION OF MEN.

THERE are three theories by which men account for all phenomena, for everything that happens: first, the supernatural; second, the supernatural and natural; third, the natural. Between these theories there has been, from the dawn of civilisation, a continual conflict. In this great war nearly all the soldiers have been in the ranks of the supernatural. The believers in the supernatural insist that matter is controlled and directed entirely by powers from without; while naturalists maintain that nature acts from within; that nature is not acted upon; that the universe is all there is; that nature with infinite arms embraces everything that exists, and that all supposed powers beyond the limits of the material are simply ghosts. You say, "Oh, this is materialism!" What is matter? I take in my hand some earth—in this dust put seeds. Let the arrows of light from the quiver of the sun smite upon it; let the rain fall upon it. The seeds will grow, and a plant will bud and blossom. Do you understand this? Can you explain it better than you can the production of thought? Have you the slightest conception of what it really is? And yet you speak of matter as though acquainted with its origin, as though you had torn from the clenched hands of the rocks the secrets of material existence. Do you know what force is? Can you account for molecular action? Are you really familiar with chemistry, and can you account for the loves and hatreds of the atoms? Is there not something in matter that forever eludes? After all,

can you get beyond, above, or below appearances? Before you cry "Materialism!" had you not better ascertain what matter really is? Can you think even of anything without a material basis? Is it possible to imagine the annihilation of a single atom? Is it possible for you to conceive of the creation of an atom? Can you have a thought that was not suggested to you by what you call matter?

Our fathers denounced materialism, and accounted for all phenomena by the caprice of gods and devils.

For thousands of years it was believed that ghosts, good and bad, benevolent and malignant, weak and powerful, in some mysterious way, produced all phenomena; that disease and health, happiness and misery, fortune and misfortune, peace and war, life and death, success and failure, were but arrows from the quivers of these ghosts; that shadowy phantoms rewarded and punished mankind; that they were pleased and displeased by the actions of men; that they sent and withheld the snow, the light, and the rain; that they blessed the earth with harvests or cursed it with famine; that they fed or starved the children of men; that they crowned and uncrowned kings; that they took sides in war; that they controlled the winds; that they gave prosperous voyages, allowing the brave mariner to meet his wife and child inside the harbour bar, or sent the storms, strewing the sad shores with wrecks of ships and the bodies of men.

Formerly these ghosts were believed to be almost innumerable. Earth, air, and water were filled with these phantom hosts. In modern times they have greatly decreased in number, because the second theory—a mingling of the supernatural and natural—has generally

been adopted. The remaining ghosts, however, are supposed to perform the same offices as the hosts of yore.

It has always been believed that these ghosts could in some way be appeased; that they could be flattered by sacrifices, by prayer, by fasting, by the building of temples and cathedrals, by the blood of men and beasts, by forms and ceremonies, by chants, by kneelings and prostrations, by flagellations and maimings, by renouncing the joys of home, by living alone in the wide desert, by the practice of celibacy, by inventing instruments of torture, by destroying men, women, and children, by covering the earth with dungeons, by burning unbelievers, by putting chains upon the thoughts and manacles upon the limbs of men, by believing things without evidence and against evidence, by disbelieving and denying demonstration, by despising facts, by hating reason, by denouncing liberty, by maligning heretics, by slandering the dead, by subscribing to senseless and cruel creeds, by discouraging investigation, by worshipping a book, by the cultivation of credulity, by observing certain times and days, by counting beads, by gazing at crosses, by hiring others to repeat verses and prayers, by burning candles and ringing bells, by enslaving each other and putting out the eyes of the soul. All this has been done to appease and flatter these monsters of the air.

In the history of our poor world, no horror has been omitted, no infamy has been left undone, by the believers in ghosts—by the worshippers of these fleshless phantoms. And yet these shadows were born of cowardice and malignity. They were painted by the pencil of fear upon the canvas of ignorance by that artist called superstition.

From these ghosts our fathers received information. They were the schoolmasters of our ancestors. They were the scientists and philosophers, the geologists, legislators, astronomers, physicians, metaphysicians, and historians of the past. For ages these ghosts were supposed to be the only source of real

knowledge. They inspired men to write books, and the books were considered sacred. If facts were found to be inconsistent with these books, so much the worse for the facts, and especially for their discoverers. It was then, and still is, believed that these books are the basis of the idea of immortality; that to give up these volumes, or, rather, the idea that they are inspired, is to renounce the idea of immortality. This I deny.

The idea of immortality, that like a sea has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death. It is the rainbow—Hope shining upon the tears of grief.

From the books written by the ghosts we have at last ascertained that they knew nothing about the world in which we live. Did they know anything about the next? Upon every point where contradiction is possible they have been contradicted.

By these ghosts, by these citizens of the air, the affairs of government were administered; all authority to govern came from them. The emperors, kings, and potentates all had commissions from these phantoms. Man was not considered as the source of any power whatever. To rebel against the king was to rebel against the ghosts, and nothing less than the blood of the offender could appease the invisible phantom or the visible tyrant. Kneeling was the proper position to be assumed by the multitude. The prostrate were the good. Those who stood erect were infidels and traitors. In the name and by the authority of the ghosts, man was enslaved, crushed, and plundered. The many toiled wearily in the storm and sun that the few favourites of the ghosts might live in idleness. The many lived in huts, and caves, and dens, that the

few might dwell in palaces. The many covered themselves with rags, that the few might robe themselves in purple and in gold. The many crept, and cringed, and crawled, that the few might tread upon their flesh with iron feet.

From the ghosts men received, not only authority, but information of every kind. They told us the form of this earth. They informed us that eclipses were caused by the sins of man; that the universe was made in six days; that astronomy and geology were devices of wicked men, instigated by wicked ghosts; that gazing at the sky with a telescope was a dangerous thing; that digging into the earth was sinful curiosity; that trying to be wise above what they had written was born of a rebellious and irreverent spirit.

They told us there was no virtue like belief, and no crime like doubt; that investigation was pure impudence, and the punishment therefor eternal torment. They not only told us all about this world, but about two others; and, if their statements about the other worlds are as true as about this, no one can estimate the value of their information.

For countless ages the world was governed by ghosts, and they spared no pains to change the eagle of the human intellect into a bat of darkness. To accomplish this infamous purpose; to drive the love of truth from the human heart; to prevent the advancement of mankind; to shut out from the world every ray of intellectual light; to pollute every mind with superstition, the power of kings, the cunning and cruelty of priests, and the wealth of nations were exhausted.

During these years of persecution, ignorance, superstition, and slavery, nearly all the people, the kings, lawyers, doctors, the learned and the unlearned, believed in that frightful production of ignorance, fear, and faith, called witchcraft. They believed that man was the sport and prey of devils. They really thought that the very air was thick with these enemies of man. With few excep-

tions, this hideous and infamous belief was universal. Under these conditions progress was almost impossible.

Fear paralyses the brain. Progress is born of courage. Fear believes—courage doubts. Fear falls upon the earth and prays—courage stands erect and thinks. Fear retreats—courage advances. Fear is barbarism—courage is civilisation. Fear believes in witchcraft, in devils, and in ghosts. Fear is religion—courage is science.

The facts upon which this terrible belief rested were proved over and over again in every court of Europe. Thousands confessed themselves guilty—admitted that they had sold themselves to the devil. They gave the particulars of the sale; told what they said and what the devil replied. They confessed this, when they knew that confession was death; knew that their property would be confiscated, and their children left to beg their bread. This is one of the miracles of history—one of the strangest contradictions of the human mind. Without doubt, they really believed themselves guilty. In the first place, they believed in witchcraft as a fact, and when charged with it they probably became insane. In their insanity they confessed their guilt. They found themselves abhorred and deserted—charged with a crime that they could not disprove. Like a man in quicksand, every effort only sunk them deeper. Caught in this frightful web, at the mercy of the spiders of superstition, hope fled, and nothing remained but the insanity of confession. The whole world appeared to be insane.

In the time of James the First a man was executed for causing a storm at sea with the intention of drowning one of the royal family. How could he disprove it? How could he show that he did not cause the storm? All storms were at that time generally supposed to be caused by the devil—the prince of the power of the air—and by those whom he assisted.

I implore you to remember that the

believers in such impossible things were the authors of our creeds and confessions of faith.

A woman was tried and convicted before Sir Matthew Hale, one of the great judges and lawyers of England, for having caused children to vomit crooked pins. She was also charged with having nursed devils. The learned judge charged the intelligent jury that there was no doubt as to the existence of witches; that it was established by all history, and expressly taught by the Bible.

The woman was hanged and her body burned.

Sir Thomas More declared that to give up witchcraft was to throw away the sacred Scriptures. In my judgment, he was right.

John Wesley was a firm believer in ghosts and witches, and insisted upon it, years after all laws upon the subject had been repealed in England. I beg of you to remember that John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist Church.

In New England a woman was charged with being a witch, and with having changed herself into a fox. While in that condition she was attacked and bitten by some dogs. A committee of three men, by order of the court, examined this woman. They removed her clothing and searched for "witch spots." That is to say, spots into which needles could be thrust without giving her pain. They reported to the court that such spots were found. She denied, however, that she ever had changed herself into a fox. Upon the report of the committee she was found guilty and actually executed. This was done by our Puritan fathers, by the gentlemen who braved the dangers of the deep for the sake of worshipping God and persecuting their fellow-men.

In those days people believed in what was known as lycanthropy—that is, that persons, with the assistance of the devil, could assume the form of wolves. An instance is given where a man was attacked by a wolf. He defended him-

self, and succeeded in cutting off one of the animal's paws. The wolf ran away. The man picked up the paw, put it in his pocket, and carried it home. There he found his wife with one of her hands gone. He took the paw from his pocket. It had changed to a human hand. He charged his wife with being a witch. She was tried. She confessed her guilt, and was burned.

People were burned for causing frosts in summer—for destroying crops with hail—for causing storms—for making cows go dry, and even for souring beer. There was no impossibility for which someone was not tried and convicted. The life of no one was secure. To be charged was to be convicted. Every man was at the mercy of every other. This infamous belief was so firmly seated in the minds of the people that to express a doubt as to its truth was to be suspected. Whoever denied the existence of witches and devils was denounced as an infidel.

They believed that animals were often taken possession of by devils, and that the killing of the animal would destroy the devil. They absolutely tried, convicted, and executed dumb beasts.

At Basle, in 1470, a rooster was tried upon the charge of having laid an egg. Rooster eggs were used only in making witch ointment—this everybody knew. The rooster was convicted, and with all due solemnity was burned in the public square. So a hog and six pigs were tried for having killed and partially eaten a child. The hog was convicted, but the pigs, on account probably of their extreme youth, were acquitted. As late as 1740 a cow was tried and convicted of being possessed by a devil.

They used to exorcise rats, locusts, snakes, and vermin. They used to go through the alleys, streets, and fields, and warn them to leave within a certain number of days. In case they disobeyed, they were threatened with pains and penalties.

But let us be careful how we laugh at these things. Let us not pride ourselves

too much on the progress of our age. We must not forget that some of our people are yet in the same intelligent business. Only a little while ago the governor of Minnesota appointed a day of fasting and prayer, to see if some power could not be induced to kill the grasshoppers, or send them into some other State.

About the close of the fifteenth century, so great was the excitement with regard to the existence of witchcraft that Pope Innocent VIII. issued a bull directing the inquisitors to be vigilant in searching out and punishing all guilty of this crime. Forms for the trial were regularly laid down in a book or pamphlet called the *Malleus Maleficorum* (Hammer of Witches), which was issued by the Roman See. Popes Alexander, Leo, and Adrian issued like bulls. For two hundred and fifty years the Church was busy in punishing the impossible crime of witchcraft; in burning, hanging, and torturing men, women, and children. Protestants were as active as Catholics, and in Geneva five hundred witches were burned at the stake in a period of three months. About one thousand were executed in one year in the diocese of Como. At least one hundred thousand victims suffered in Germany alone, the last execution (in Wurtzburg) taking place as late as 1739. Witches were burned in Switzerland as late as 1780.

In England the same frightful scenes were enacted. Statutes were passed from Henry VI. to James I. defining the crime and its punishment. The last Act passed by the British Parliament was when Lord Bacon was a member of the House of Commons; and this Act was not repealed until 1736.

Sir William Blackstone, in his Commentaries on the Laws of England, says: "To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence, of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the word of God in various passages both of the Old and New Testament; and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testi-

mony, either by examples seemingly well attested or by prohibitory laws, which at least suppose the possibility of a commerce with evil spirits."

In Brown's Dictionary of the Bible, published at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1807, it is said that "A witch is a woman that has dealings with Satan. That such persons are among men is abundantly plain from Scripture, and that they ought to be put to death."

This work was republished in Albany, New York, in 1816. No wonder the clergy of that city are ignorant and bigoted even unto this day.

In 1716 Mrs. Hicks and her daughter, nine years of age, were hanged for selling their souls to the devil, and raising a storm by pulling off their stockings and making a lather of soap.

In England it has been estimated that at least thirty thousand were hanged and burned. The last victim executed in Scotland perished in 1722. "She was an innocent old woman, who had so little idea of her situation as to rejoice at the sight of the fire which was destined to consume her. She had a daughter, lame of both hands and of feet—a circumstance attributed to the witch having been used to transform her daughter into a pony and getting her shod by the devil."

In 1692 nineteen persons were executed and one pressed to death in Salem, Massachusetts, for the crime of witchcraft.

It was thought in those days that men and women made compacts with the devil, orally and in writing; that they abjured God and Jesus Christ, and dedicated themselves wholly to the devil. The contracts were confirmed at a general meeting of witches and ghosts, over which the devil himself presided; and the persons generally signed the articles of agreement with their own blood. These contracts were, in some instances, for a few years; in others, for life. General assemblies of the witches were held at least once a year, at which they appeared entirely naked, besmeared with an ointment made from the bodies of unbaptised

infants. "To these meetings they rode from great distances on broomsticks, pokers, goats, hogs, and dogs. Here they did homage to the prince of hell, and offered him sacrifices of young children, and practised all sorts of license until the break of day."

"As late as 1815 Belgium was disgraced by a witch trial; and guilt was established by the water ordeal." "In 1836 the populace of Hela, near Dantzic, twice plunged into the sea a woman reputed to be a sorceress; and as the miserable creature persisted in rising to the surface, she was pronounced guilty and beaten to death."

"It was believed that the bodies of devils are not, like those of men and animals, cast in an unchangeable mould. It was thought they were like clouds, refined and subtle matter, capable of assuming any form and penetrating into any orifice. The horrible tortures they endured in their place of punishment rendered them extremely sensitive to suffering, and they continually sought a temperate and somewhat moist warmth in order to allay their pangs. It was for this reason they so frequently entered into men and women."

The devil could transport men, at his will, through the air. He could beget children; and Martin Luther himself had come in contact with one of these children. He recommended the mother to throw the child into the river, in order to free their house from the presence of a devil.

It was believed that the devil could transform people into any shape he pleased.

Whoever denied these things was denounced as an infidel. All the believers in witchcraft confidently appealed to the Bible. Their mouths were filled with passages demonstrating the existence of witches and their power over human beings. By the Bible they proved that innumerable evil spirits were ranging over the world endeavouring to ruin mankind; that these spirits possessed a power and wisdom far transcending

the limits of human faculties; that they delighted in every misfortune that could befall the world; that their malice was superhuman. That they caused tempests was proved by the action of the devil towards Job; by the passage in the book of Revelation describing the four angels who held the four winds, and to whom it was given to afflict the earth. They believed the devil could carry persons hundred of miles, in a few seconds, through the air. They believed this, because they knew that Christ had been carried by the devil in the same manner and placed on a pinnacle of the temple. "The prophet Habakkuk had been transported by a spirit from Judea to Babylon; and Philip, the evangelist, had been the object of a similar miracle; and in the same way St. Paul had been carried in the body into the third heaven."

"In those pious days they believed that *Incubi* and *Succubi* were forever wandering among mankind, alluring, by more than human charms, the unwary to their destruction, and laying plots, which were too often successful, against the virtue of the saints. Sometimes the witches kindled in the monastic priest a more terrestrial fire. People told, with bated breath, how, under the spell of a vindictive woman, four successive abbots in a German monastery had been wasted away by an unholy flame."

An instance is given in which the devil not only assumed the appearance of a holy man, in order to pay his addresses to a lady, but, when discovered, crept under the bed, suffered himself to be dragged out, and was impudent enough to declare that he was the veritable bishop. So perfectly had he assumed the form and features of the prelate that those who knew the bishop best were deceived.

One can hardly imagine the frightful state of the human mind during these long centuries of darkness and superstition. To them these things were awful and frightful realities. Hovering above them in the air, in their houses, in the bosoms of friends, in their very

bodies, in all the darkness of night, everywhere, around, above, and below, were innumerable hosts of unclean and malignant devils.

From the malice of those leering and vindictive vampires of the air the Church pretended to defend mankind. Pursued by these phantoms, the frightened multitudes fell upon their faces and implored the aid of robed hypocrisy and sceptred theft.

Take from the orthodox Church of to-day the threat and fear of hell, and it becomes an extinct volcano.

Take from the Church the miraculous, the supernatural, the incomprehensible, the unreasonable, the impossible, the unknowable, and the absurd, and nothing but a vacuum remains.

Notwithstanding all the infamous things justly laid to the charge of the Church, we are told that the civilisation of to-day is the child of what we are pleased to call the superstition of the past.

Religion has not civilised man—man has civilised religion. God improves as man advances.

Let me call your attention to what we have received from the followers of the ghosts. Let me give you an outline of the sciences as taught by these philosophers of the clouds.

All diseases were produced either as a punishment by the good ghosts or out of pure malignity by the bad ones. There were, properly speaking, no diseases. The sick were possessed by ghosts. The science of medicine consisted in knowing how to persuade these ghosts to vacate the premises. For thousands of years the diseased were treated with incantations, with hideous noises, with drums and gongs. Everything was done to make the visit of the ghost as unpleasant as possible, and they generally succeeded in making things so disagreeable that, if the ghost did not leave, the patient did. These ghosts were supposed to be of different rank, power, and dignity. Now and then a man pretended to have won

the favour of some powerful ghost, and that gave him power over the little ones. Such a man became an eminent physician.

It was found that certain kinds of smoke, such as that produced by burning the liver of a fish, the dried skin of a serpent, the eyes of a toad, or the tongue of an adder, were exceedingly offensive to the nostrils of an ordinary ghost. With this smoke the sick room would be filled until the ghost had vanished or the patient died.

It was also believed that certain words—the names of the most powerful ghosts—when properly pronounced, were very effective weapons. It was for a long time thought that Latin words were the best, Latin being a dead language, and known by the clergy. Others thought that two sticks laid across each other and held before the wicked ghost would cause it instantly to flee in dread away.

For thousands of years the practice of medicine consisted in driving these evil spirits out of the bodies of men.

In some instances bargains and compromises were made with the ghosts. One case is given where a multitude of devils traded a man for a herd of swine. In this transaction the devils were the losers, as the swine immediately drowned themselves in the sea. This idea of disease appears to have been almost universal, and is by no means yet extinct.

The contortions of the epileptic, the strange twitchings of those afflicted with chorea, the shakings of palsy, dreams, trances, and the numberless frightful phenomena produced by diseases of the nerves, were all seized upon as so many proofs that the bodies of men were filled with unclean and malignant ghosts.

Whoever endeavoured to account for these things by natural causes, whoever attempted to cure diseases by natural means, was denounced by the Church as an infidel. To explain anything was a crime. It was to the interest of the priest that all phenomena should be accounted for by the will and power of gods and devils. The moment it is

admitted that all phenomena are within the domain of the natural, the necessity for a priest has disappeared. Religion breathes the air of the supernatural. Take from the mind of man the idea of the supernatural, and religion ceases to exist. For this reason, the Church has always despised the man who explained the wonderful. Upon this principle, nothing was left undone to stay the science of medicine. As long as plagues and pestilences could be stopped by prayer, the priest was useful. The moment the physician found a cure, the priest became an extravagance. The moment it began to be apparent that prayer could do nothing for the body, the priest shifted his ground and began praying for the soul.

Long after the devil idea was substantially abandoned in the practice of medicine, and when it was admitted that God had nothing to do with ordinary coughs and colds, it was still believed that all the frightful diseases were sent by him as punishments for the wickedness of the people. It was thought to be a kind of blasphemy to even try, by any natural means, to stay the ravages of pestilence. Formerly, during the prevalence of plague and epidemics, the arrogance of the priest was boundless. He told the people that they had slighted the clergy, that they had refused to pay tithes, that they had doubted some of the doctrines of the Church, and that God was now taking his revenge. The people, for the most part, believed this infamous tissue of priestcraft. They hastened to fall upon their knees; they poured out their wealth upon the altars of hypocrisy; they abased and debased themselves; from their minds they banished all doubts, and made haste to crawl in the very dust of humility.

The Church never wanted disease to be under the control of man. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, preached a sermon against vaccination. His idea was that, if God had decreed from all eternity that a certain man should die with the small-pox, it was a

frightful sin to avoid and annul that decree by the trick of vaccination. Small-pox being regarded as one of the heaviest guns in the arsenal of heaven, to spike it was the height of presumption. Plagues and pestilences were instrumentalities in the hands of God with which to gain the love and worship of mankind. To find a cure for disease was to take a weapon from the Church. No one tries to cure the ague with prayer. Quinine has been found altogether more reliable. Just as soon as a specific is found for a disease, that disease will be left out of the list of prayer. The number of diseases with which God from time to time afflicts mankind is continually decreasing. In a few years all of them will be under the control of man, the gods will be left unarmed, and the threats of their priests will excite only a smile.

The science of medicine has had but one enemy—religion. Man was afraid to save his body for fear he might lose his soul.

Is it any wonder that the people in those days believed in and taught the infamous doctrine of eternal punishment—a doctrine that makes God a heartless monster and man a slimy hypocrite and slave?

The ghosts were historians, and their histories were the grossest absurdities. "Tales told by idiots, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." In those days the histories were written by the monks, who, as a rule, were almost as superstitious as they were dishonest. They wrote as though they had been witnesses of every occurrence they related. They wrote the history of every country of importance. They told all the past, and predicted all the future with an impudence that amounted to sublimity. "They traced the order of St. Michael, in France, to the archangel himself, and alleged that he was the founder of a chivalric order in heaven itself. They said that Tartars originally came from hell, and that they were

called Tartars because Tartarus was one of the names of perdition. They declared that Scotland was so named after *Scota*, a daughter of Pharaoh, who landed in Ireland, invaded Scotland, and took it by force of arms. This statement was made in a letter addressed to the Pope in the fourteenth century, and was alluded to as a well-known fact. The letter was written by some of the highest dignitaries, and by the direction of the King himself.

These gentlemen accounted for the red on the breasts of robins from the fact that these birds carried water to unbaptised infants in hell.

Matthew, of Paris, an eminent historian of the fourteenth century, gave the world the following piece of information: "It is well known that Mohammed was once a cardinal, and became a heretic because he failed in his effort to be elected Pope"; and that, having drank to excess, he fell by the roadside, and in this condition was killed by swine. "And for that reason his followers abhor pork even unto this day."

Another eminent historian informs us that Nero was in the habit of vomiting frogs. When I read this I said to myself: Some of the croakers of the present day against progress would be the better for such a vomit.

The history of Charlemagne was written by Turpin, of Rheims. He was a bishop. He assures us that the walls of a city fell down in answer to prayer; that there were giants in those days who could take fifty ordinary men under their arms and walk away with them. "With the greatest of these, a direct descendant of Goliath, one Orlando, had a theological discussion; and in the heat of the debate, when the giant was overwhelmed with the argument, Orlando rushed forward and inflicted a fatal stab."

The history of Britain, written by the archdeacons of Monmouth and Oxford, was wonderfully popular. According to them, Brutus conquered England and built the city of London. During his

time it rained pure blood for three days. At another time a monster came from the sea, and, after having devoured great multitudes of people, swallowed the king and disappeared. They tell us that King Arthur was not born like other mortals, but was the result of a magical contrivance; that he had great luck in killing giants; that he killed one in France that had the cheerful habit of eating some thirty men a day; that this giant had clothes woven of the beards of the kings he had devoured. To cap the climax, one of the authors of this book was promoted for having written the only reliable history of his country.

In all the histories of those days there is hardly a single truth. Facts were considered unworthy of preservation. Anything that really happened was not of sufficient interest or importance to be recorded. The great religious historian, Eusebius, ingeniously remarks that in his history he carefully omitted whatever tended to discredit the Church, and that he piously magnified all that conduced to her glory.

The same glorious principle was scrupulously adhered to by all the historians of that time.

They wrote, and the people believed, that the tracks of Pharaoh's chariots were still visible on the sands of the Red Sea, and that they had been miraculously preserved from the winds and waves as perpetual witnesses of the great miracle there performed.

It is safe to say that every truth in the histories of those times is the result of accident or mistake.

They accounted for everything as the work of good and evil spirits. With cause and effect they had nothing to do. Facts were in no way related to each other. God, governed by infinite caprice, filled the world with miracles and disconnected events. From the quiver of his hatred came the arrows of famine, pestilence, and death.

The moment the idea is abandoned that all is natural, that all phenomena are the necessary links in the

endless chain of being, the conception of history becomes impossible. With the ghosts, the present is not the child of the past, nor the mother of the future. In the domain of religion all is chance, accident, and caprice.

Do not forget, I pray you, that our creeds were written by the cotemporaries of these historians.

The same idea was applied to law. It was believed by our intelligent ancestors that all law derived its sacredness and its binding force from the fact that it had been communicated to man by the ghosts. Of course it was not pretended that the ghosts told everybody the law; but they told it to a few, and the few told it to the people, and the people, as a rule, paid them exceedingly well for their trouble. It was thousands of ages before the people commenced making laws for themselves, and, strange as it may appear, most of these laws were vastly superior to the ghost article. Through the web and woof of human legislation began to run and shine and glitter the golden thread of justice.

During these years of darkness it was believed that rather than see an act of injustice done, rather than see the innocent suffer, rather than see the guilty triumph, some ghost would interfere. This belief, as a rule, gave great satisfaction to the victorious party, and, as the other man was dead, no complaint was heard from him.

This doctrine was the sanctification of brute force and chance. They had trials by battle, by fire, by water, and by lot. Persons were made to grasp hot iron, and if it burned them their guilt was established. Others, with tied hands and feet, were cast into the sea, and if they sank the verdict of guilty was unanimous; if they did not sink, they were in league with devils.

So, in England, persons charged with crime could appeal to the corsned. The corsned was a piece of the sacramental bread. If the defendant could swallow this piece, he went acquit. Godwin, Earl of Kent, in the time of Edward the

Confessor, appealed to the corsned. He failed to swallow it, and was choked to death.

The ghosts and their followers always took delight in torture, in cruel and unusual punishments. For the infraction of most of their laws death was the penalty—death produced by stoning and by fire. Sometimes, when man committed only murder, he was allowed to flee to some city of refuge. Murder was a crime against man. But for saying certain words, or denying certain doctrines, or for picking up sticks on certain days, or for worshipping the wrong ghost, or for failing to pray to the right one, or for laughing at a priest, or for saying that wine was not blood, or that bread was not flesh, or for failing to regard ram's horns as artillery, or for insisting that a dry bone was scarcely sufficient to take the place of water works, or that a raven, as a rule, made a poor landlord—death, produced by all the ways that the ingenuity of hatred could devise, was the penalty.

Law is a growth—it is a science. Right and wrong exist in the nature of things. Things are not right because they are commanded, nor wrong because they are prohibited. There are real crimes enough without creating artificial ones. All progress in legislation has for centuries consisted in repealing the laws of the ghosts.

The idea of right and wrong is born of man's capacity to enjoy and suffer. If man could not suffer, if he could not inflict injury upon his fellow, if he could neither feel nor inflict pain, the idea of right and wrong never would have entered his brain. But for this, the word "conscience" never would have passed the lips of man.

There is one good—happiness. There is but one sin—selfishness. All law should be for the preservation of the one and the destruction of the other.

Under the regime of the ghosts, laws were not supposed to exist in the nature of things. They were supposed to be simply the irresponsible command of a

ghost. These commands were not supposed to rest upon reason; they were the product of arbitrary will.

The penalties for the violation of these laws were as cruel as the laws were senseless and absurd. Working on the Sabbath and murder were both punished with death. The tendency of such laws is to blot from the human heart the sense of justice.

To show you how perfectly every department of knowledge, or ignorance rather, was saturated with superstition, I will for a moment refer to the science of language.

It was thought by our fathers that Hebrew was the original language; that it was taught to Adam in the Garden of Eden by the Almighty, and that consequently all languages came from, and could be traced to, the Hebrew. Every fact inconsistent with that idea was discarded. According to the ghosts, the trouble at the tower of Babel accounted for the fact that all people did not speak Hebrew. The Babel business settled all questions in the science of language.

After a time, so many facts were found to be inconsistent with the Hebrew idea that it began to fall into disrepute, and other languages began to compete for the honour of being the original.

Andre Kempe, in 1569, published a work on the language of Paradise, in which he maintained that God spoke to Adam in Swedish; that Adam answered in Danish; and that the serpent—which appears to me quite probable—spoke to Eve in French. Erro, in a work published at Madrid, took the ground that Basque was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden; but in 1580 Goropius published his celebrated work at Antwerp, in which he put the whole matter at rest by showing, beyond all doubt, that the language spoken in Paradise was neither more nor less than plain Holland Dutch.

The real founder of the science of language was Leibnitz, a cotemporary of Sir Isaac Newton. He discarded the idea that all languages could be traced

to one language. He maintained that language was a natural growth. Experience teaches us that this must be so. Words are continually dying and continually being born. Words are naturally and necessarily produced. Words are the garments of thought, the robes of ideas. Some are as rude as the skins of wild beasts, and others glisten and glitter like silk and gold. They have been born of hatred and revenge; of love and self-sacrifice; of hope and fear; of agony and joy. These words are born of the terror and beauty of nature. The stars have fashioned them. In them mingle the darkness and the dawn. From everything they have taken something. Words are the crystallisations of human history, of all that man has enjoyed and suffered—his victories and defeats—all that he has lost and won. Words are the shadows of all that has been—the mirrors of all that is.

The ghosts also enlightened our fathers in astronomy and geology. According to them, the earth was made out of nothing, and, a little more nothing having been taken than was used in the construction of this world, the stars were made out of what was left over. Cosmos, in the sixth century, taught that the stars were impelled by angels, who either carried them on their shoulders, rolled them in front of them, or drew them after. He also taught that each angel that pushed a star took great pains to observe what the other angels were doing, so that the relative distances between the stars might always remain the same. He also gave his idea as to the form of the world.

He stated that the world was a vast parallelogram; that on the outside was a strip of land, like the frame of a common slate; that then there was a strip of water, and in the middle a great piece of land; that Adam and Eve lived on the outer strip; that their descendants, with the exception of the Noah family, were drowned by a flood on this outer strip; that the ark finally rested on the middle piece of land where we now are. He

accounted for night and day by saying that on the outside strip of land there was a high mountain around which the sun and moon revolved, and that when the sun was on the other side of the mountain it was night, and when on this side it was day.

He also declared that the earth was flat. This he proved by many passages from the Bible. Among other reasons for believing the earth to be flat, he brought forward the following: We are told in the New Testament that Christ shall come again in glory and power, and all the world shall see him. Now, if the world is round, how are the people on the other side going to see Christ when he comes? That settled the question, and the Church not only endorsed the book, but declared that whoever believed less or more than stated by Cosmos was a heretic.

In those blessed days Ignorance was a king and Science an outcast.

They knew the moment this earth ceased to be the centre of the universe, and became a mere speck in the starry heaven of existence, that their religion would become a childish fable of the past.

In the name and by the authority of the ghosts men enslaved their fellow-men; they trampled upon the rights of women and children. In the name and by the authority of ghosts they bought and sold and destroyed each other; they filled heaven with tyrants and earth with slaves, the present with despair and the future with horror. In the name and by the authority of the ghosts they imprisoned the human mind, polluted the conscience, hardened the heart, subverted justice, crowned robbery, sainted hypocrisy, and extinguished for a thousand years the torch of reason.

I have endeavoured, in some faint degree, to show you what has happened, and what always will happen when men are governed by superstition and fear; when they desert the sublime standard of reason; when they take the words of others and do not investigate for themselves.

Even the great men of those days were nearly as weak in this matter as the most ignorant. Kepler, one of the greatest men of the world, an astronomer second to none, although he plucked from the stars the secrets of the universe, was an astrologer, and really believed that he could predict the career of a man by finding what star was in the ascendant at his birth. This great man breathed, so to speak, the atmosphere of his time. He believed in the music of the spheres, and assigned alto, bass, tenor, and treble to certain stars.

Tycho Brahe, another astronomer, kept an idiot, whose disconnected and meaningless words he carefully set down, and then put them together in such manner as to make prophecies, and waited patiently to see them fulfilled. Luther believed that he had actually seen the devil, and had discussed points of theology with him. The human mind was in chains. Every idea almost was a monster. Thought was deformed. Facts were looked upon as worthless. Only the wonderful was worth preserving. Things that actually happened were not considered worth recording—real occurrences were too common. Everybody expected the miraculous.

The ghosts were supposed to be busy; devils were thought to be the most industrious things in the universe, and with these imps every occurrence of an unusual character was in some way connected. There was no order, no serenity, no certainty in anything. Everything depended upon ghosts and phantoms. Man was, for the most part, at the mercy of malevolent spirits. He protected himself as best he could with holy water and tapers and wafers and cathedrals. He made noises and rung bells to frighten the ghosts, and he made music to charm them. He used smoke to choke them and incense to please them. He wore beads and crosses. He said prayers, and hired others to say them. He fasted when he was hungry, and feasted when he was not. He believed everything that seemed

unreasonable, just to appease the ghosts. He humbled himself. He crawled in the dust. He shut the doors and windows, and excluded every ray of light from the temple of the soul. He debauched and polluted his own mind, and toiled night and day to repair the walls of his own prison. From the garden of his heart he plucked and trampled upon the holy flowers of pity.

The priests revelled in horrible descriptions of hell. Concerning the wrath of God they grew eloquent. They denounced man as totally depraved. They made reason blasphemy and pity a crime. Nothing so delighted them as painting the torments and sufferings of the lost. Over the worm that never dies they grew poetic; and the second death filled them with a kind of holy delight. According to them, the smoke and cries ascending from hell were the perfume and music of heaven.

At the risk of being tiresome, I have said what I have to show you the productions of the human mind, when enslaved; the effects of widespread ignorance—the results of fear. I want to convince you that every form of slavery is a viper that, sooner or later, will strike its poison fangs into the bosoms of men.

The first great step towards progress is for man to cease to be the slave of man; the second, to cease to be the slave of the monsters of his own creation—of the ghosts and phantoms of the air.

For ages the human race was imprisoned. Through the bars and grates came a few struggling rays of light. Against these grates and bars Science pressed its pale and thoughtful face, wooed by the holy dawn of human advancement.

Men found that the real was the useful; that what a man knows is better than what a ghost says; that an event is more valuable than a prophecy. They found that diseases were not produced by spirits, and could not be cured by frightening them away. They found that death was as natural as life. They began to

study the anatomy and chemistry of the human body, and found that all was natural and within the domain of law.

The conjurer and sorcerer were discarded, and the physician and surgeon employed. They found that the earth was not flat; that the stars were not mere specks. They found that being born under a particular planet had nothing to do with the fortunes of men.

The astrologer was discharged, and the astronomer took his place.

They found that the earth had swept through the constellations for millions of ages. They found that good and evil were produced by natural causes, and not by ghosts; that man could not be good enough or bad enough to stop or cause a rain; that diseases were produced as naturally as grass, and were not sent as punishments upon man for failing to believe a certain creed. They found that man, through intelligence, could take advantage of the forces of Nature—that he could make the waves, the winds, the flames, and the lightnings of heaven do his bidding and minister to his wants. They found that the ghosts knew nothing of benefit to man; that they were utterly ignorant of geology, of astronomy, of geography; that they knew nothing of history; that they were poor doctors and worse surgeons; that they knew nothing of law and less of justice; that they were without brains, and utterly destitute of hearts; that they knew nothing of the rights of men; that they were despisers of women, the haters of progress, the enemies of science, and the destroyers of liberty.

The condition of the world during the Dark Ages shows exactly the result of enslaving the bodies and souls of men. In those days there was no freedom. Labour was despised, and a labourer was considered but little above a beast. Ignorance, like a vast cowl, covered the brain of the world, and superstition ran riot with the imagination of man. The air was filled with angels, with demons and monsters. Credulity sat upon the

throne of the soul, and Reason was an exiled king. A man to be distinguished must be a soldier or a monk. War and theology—that is to say, murder and hypocrisy—were the principal employments of man. Industry was a slave, theft was commerce; murder was war, hypocrisy was religion.

Every Christian country maintained that it was no robbery to take the property of Mohammedans by force, and no murder to kill the owners. Lord Bacon was the first man of note who maintained that a Christian country was bound to keep its plighted faith with an infidel nation. Reading and writing were considered dangerous arts. Every layman who could read and write was suspected of being a heretic. All thought was discouraged. They forged chains of superstition for the minds and manacles of iron for the bodies of men. The earth was ruled by the cowl and sword, by the mitre and sceptre, by the altar and throne, by Fear and Force, by Ignorance and Faith, by ghouls and ghosts.

In the fifteenth century the following law was in force in England:—

“That whosoever reads the Scriptures in the mother tongue shall forfeit land, cattle, life, and goods from their heirs for ever, and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the Crown, and most arrant traitors to the land.”

During the first year this law was in force thirty-nine were hanged for its violation and their bodies burned.

In the sixteenth century men were burned because they failed to kneel to a procession of monks.

The slightest word uttered against the superstition of the time was punished with death.

Even the reformers, so-called, of those days had no idea of intellectual liberty—no idea even of toleration. Luther, Knox, Calvin, believed in religious liberty only when they were in the minority. The moment they were clothed with power they began to exterminate with fire and sword.

Castellio was the first minister who advocated the liberty of the soul. He was regarded by the reformers as a criminal, and treated as though he had committed the crime of crimes.

Bodinus, a lawyer of France, about the same time, wrote a few words in favour of the freedom of conscience, but public opinion was overwhelmingly against him. The people were ready, anxious, and willing with whip and chain and fire to drive from the mind of man the heresy that he had a right to think.

Montaigne, a man blessed with so much common sense that he was the most uncommon man of his time, was the first to raise a voice against torture in France. But what was the voice of one man against the terrible cry of ignorant, infatuated, superstitious, and malevolent millions? It was the cry of a drowning man in the wild roar of the cruel sea.

In spite of the efforts of the brave few, the infamous war against the freedom of the soul was waged until at least one hundred millions of human beings—fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters—with hopes, loves, and aspirations like ourselves, were sacrificed upon the cruel altar of an ignorant faith. They perished in every way by which death can be produced. Every nerve of pain was sought out and touched by the believers in ghosts.

For my part, I glory in the fact that here in the new world—in the United States—liberty of conscience was first guaranteed to man, and that the Constitution of the United States was the first great decree entered in the high court of human equity forever divorcing Church and State—the first injunction granted against the interference of the ghosts. This was one of the grandest steps ever taken by the human race in the direction of progress.

You will ask what has caused this wonderful change in three hundred years. And I answer—the inventions and discoveries of the few; the brave thoughts, the heroic utterances of the few; the acquisition of a few facts.

Besides, you must remember that every wrong in some way tends to abolish itself. It is hard to make a lie stand always. A lie will not fit a fact. It will only fit another lie made for the purpose. The life of a lie is simply a question of time. Nothing but truth is immortal. The nobles and kings quarrelled; the priests began to dispute; the ideas of government began to change.

In 1441 printing was discovered. At that time the past was a vast cemetery, with hardly an epitaph. The ideas of men had mostly perished in the brain that produced them. The lips of the human race had been sealed. Printing gave pinions to thought. It preserved ideas. It made it possible for man to bequeath to the future the riches of his brain, the wealth of his soul. At first it was used to flood the world with the mistakes of the ancients, but since that time it has been flooding the world with light.

When people read they begin to reason, and when they reason they progress. This was another grand step in the direction of progress.

The discovery of gunpowder, that put the peasant almost upon a par with the prince; that put an end to the so-called age of chivalry; that released a vast number of men from the armies; that gave pluck and nerve a chance with brute strength.

The discovery of America, whose shores were trod by the restless feet of adventure; that brought people holding every shade of superstition together; that gave the world an opportunity to compare notes, and to laugh at the follies of each other. Out of this strange mingling of all creeds, and superstitions, and facts, and theories, and countless opinions came the Great Republic.

Every fact has pushed a superstition from the brain and a ghost from the clouds. Every mechanical art is an educator. Every loom, every reaper and mower, every steamboat, every locomotive, every engine, every press, every

telegraph, is a missionary of science and an apostle of progress. Every mill, every furnace, every building with its wheels and levers, in which something is made for the convenience, for the use, and for the comfort and elevation of man, is a church, and every school-house is a temple.

Education is the most radical thing in the world.

To teach the alphabet is to inaugurate a revolution.

To build a school-house is to construct a fort.

Every library is an arsenal filled with the weapons and ammunition of progress, and every fact is a monitor with sides of iron and a turret of steel.

I thank the inventors, the discoverers, the thinkers. I thank Columbus and Magellan. I thank Galileo, and Copernicus, and Kepler, and Descartes, and Newton, and Laplace. I thank Locke, and Hume, and Bacon, and Shakespeare, and Kant, and Fichte, and Leibnitz, and Goethe. I thank Fulton, and Watts, and Volta, and Galvani, and Franklin, and Morse, who made lightning the messenger of man. I thank Humboldt, the Shakespeare of science. I thank Crompton and Arkwright, from whose brains leaped the looms and spindles that clothe the world. I thank Luther for protesting against the abuses of the Church, and I denounce him because he was the enemy of liberty. I thank Calvin for writing a book in favour of religious freedom, and I abhor him because he burned Servetus. I thank Knox for resisting episcopal persecution, and I hate him because he persecuted in his turn. I thank the Puritans for saying, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," and yet I am compelled to say that they were tyrants themselves. I thank Thomas Paine because he was a believer in liberty, and because he did as much to make my country free as any other human being. I thank Voltaire, that great man who, for half a century, was the intellectual emperor of Europe, and who, from his

throne at the foot of the Alps, pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Christendom. I thank Darwin, Haeckel, and Büchner, Spencer, Tyndall, and Huxley, Draper, Lecky, and Buckle.

I thank the inventors, the discoverers, the thinkers, the scientists, the explorers. I thank the honest millions who have toiled.

I thank the brave men with brave thoughts. They are the Atlases upon whose broad and mighty shoulders rests the grand fabric of civilisation. They are the men who have broken, and are still breaking, the chains of Superstition. They are the Titans who carried Olympus by assault, and who will soon stand victors upon Sinai's crags.

We are beginning to learn that to exchange a mistake for the truth—a superstition for a fact—to ascertain the real—is to progress.

Happiness is the only possible good, and all that tends to the happiness of man is right, and is of value. All that tends to develop the bodies and minds of men; all that gives us better houses, better clothes, better food, better pictures, grander music, better heads, better hearts; all that renders us more intellectual and more loving, nearer just; that makes us better husbands and wives, better children, better citizens—all these things combined produce what I call Progress.

Man advances only as he overcomes the obstructions of Nature, and this can be done only by labour and by thought. Labour is the foundation of all. Without labour, and without great labour, progress is impossible. The progress of the world depends upon the men who walk in the fresh furrows and through the rustling corn; upon those who sow and reap; upon those whose faces are radiant with the glare of furnace fires; upon the delvers in the mines, and the workers in shops; upon those who give to the winter air the ringing music of the axe; upon those who battle with the boisterous billows of the sea; upon the

inventors and discoverers; upon the brave thinkers.

From the surplus produced by labour schools and universities are built and fostered. From this surplus the painter is paid for the productions of the pencil; the sculptor for chiselling shapeless rock into forms divinely beautiful, and the poet for singing the hopes, the loves, the memories, and the aspirations of the world. This surplus has given us the books in which we converse with the dead and living kings of the human race. It has given us all there is of beauty, of elegance, and of refined happiness.

I am aware that there is a vast difference of opinion as to what progress really is; that many denounce the ideas of to-day as destructive of all happiness—of all good. I know that there are many worshippers of the past. They venerate the ancient because it is ancient. They see no beauty in anything from which they do not blow the dust of ages with the breath of praise. They say, no masters like the old; no religion, no governments, like the ancient; no orators, no poets, no statesmen, like those who have been dust for two thousand years. Others love the modern simply because it is modern.

We should have gratitude enough to acknowledge the obligations we are under to the great and heroic of antiquity, and independence enough not to believe what they said simply because they said it.

With the idea that labour is the basis of progress goes the truth that labour must be free. The labourer must be a free man.

The free man, working for wife and child, gets his head and hands in partnership.

To do the greatest amount of work in the shortest space of time is the problem of free labour.

Slavery does the least work in the longest space of time.

Free labour will give us wealth. Free thought will give us truth.

Slowly but surely man is freeing his imagination of these sexless phantoms, of these cruel ghosts. Slowly but surely he is rising above the superstitions of the past. He is learning to rely upon himself. He is beginning to find that labour is the only prayer that ought to be answered, and that hoping, toiling, aspiring, suffering men and women are of more importance than all the ghosts that ever wandered through the fenceless fields of space.

The believers in ghosts claim still that they are the only wise and virtuous people upon the earth; claim still that there is a difference between them and unbelievers so vast that they will be infinitely rewarded and the others infinitely punished.

I ask you to-night, do the theories and doctrines of the theologians satisfy the heart or brain of the nineteenth century?

Have the Churches the confidence of mankind?

Does the merchant give credit to a man because he belongs to a Church?

Does the banker loan money to a man because he is Methodist or Baptist?

Will a certificate of good standing in any Church be taken as collateral security for one dollar?

Will you take the word of a Church member, or his note, or his oath, simply because he is a Church member?

Are the clergy, as a class, better, kinder, and more generous to their families—to their fellow-men—than doctors, lawyers, merchants, and farmers?

Does a belief in ghosts and unreasonable things necessarily make people honest?

When a man loses confidence in Moses, must the people lose confidence in him?

Does not the credit system in morals breed extravagance in sin?

Why send missionaries to other lands while every penitentiary in ours is filled with criminals?

Is it philosophical to say that they who do right carry a cross?

Is it a source of joy to think that perdition is the destination of nearly all of the children of men?

Is it worth while to quarrel about original sin—when there is so much copy?

Does it pay to dispute about baptism, and the Trinity, and predestination, and Apostolic succession, and the infallibility of Churches, of Popes, and of books? Does all this do any good?

Are the theologians welcomers of new truths? Are they noted for their candour? Do they treat an opponent with common fairness? Are they investigators? Do they pull forward, or do they hold back?

Is science indebted to the Church for a solitary fact?

What Church is an asylum for a persecuted truth?

What great reform has been inaugurated by the Church?

Did the Church abolish slavery?

Has the Church raised its voice against war?

I used to think that there was in religion no real restraining force. Upon this point my mind has changed. Religion will prevent man from committing artificial crimes and offences.

A man committed murder. The evidence was so conclusive that he confessed his guilt.

He was asked why he killed his fellow-man.

He replied: "For money."

"Did you get any?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Fifteen cents."

"What did you do with the money?"

"Spent it."

"What for?"

"Liquor."

"What else did you find upon the dead man?"

"He had his dinner in a bucket—some meat and bread."

"What did you do with that?"

"I ate the bread."

"What did you do with the meat?"

"I threw it away."

"Why?"

"It was Friday."

Just to the extent that man has freed himself from the dominion of ghosts he has advanced. Just to the extent that he has freed himself from the tyrants of his own creation he has progressed. Just to the extent that he has investigated for himself he has lost confidence in superstition.

With knowledge, obedience becomes intelligent acquiescence—it is no longer degrading. Acquiescence in the understood—in the known—is the act of a sovereign, not of a slave. It ennobles, it does not degrade.

Man has found that he must give liberty to others in order to have it himself. He has found that a master is also a slave; that a tyrant is himself a serf. He has found that Governments should be founded and administered by man and for man; that the rights of all are equal; that the powers that be are not ordained by God; that woman is at least the equal of man; that men existed before books; that religion is one of the phases of thought through which the world is passing; that all creeds were made by man; that everything is natural; that a miracle is an impossibility; that we know nothing of origin and destiny; that concerning the unknown we are all equally ignorant; that the pew has the right to contradict what the pulpit asserts; that man is responsible only to himself and those he injures, and that all have a right to think.

True religion must be free. Without perfect liberty of the mind there can be no true religion. Without liberty the brain is a dungeon—the mind a convict. The slave may bow and cringe and crawl, but he cannot adore—he cannot love.

True religion is the perfume of a free and grateful heart. True religion is a subordination of the passions to the perceptions of the intellect. True religion is not a theory—it is a practice. It is not a creed—it is a life.

A theory that is afraid of investigation is undeserving a place in the human mind.

I do not pretend to tell what all the truth is. I do not pretend to have fathomed the abyss, nor to have floated on outstretched wings level with the dim heights of thought. I simply plead for freedom. I denounce the cruelties and horrors of slavery. I ask for light and air for the souls of men. I say, Take off those chains—break those manacles—free those limbs—release that brain! I plead for the right to think—to reason—to investigate. I ask that the future may be enriched with the honest thoughts of men. I implore every human being to be a soldier in the army of progress.

I will not invade the rights of others. You have no right to erect your toll-gate upon the highways of thought. You have no right to leap from the hedges of superstition and strike down the pioneers of the human race. You have no right to sacrifice the liberties of man upon the altars of ghosts. Believe what you may; preach what you desire; have all the forms and ceremonies you please; exercise your liberty in your own way, but extend to all others the same right.

I will not attack your doctrines nor your creeds if they accord liberty to me. If they hold thought to be dangerous—if they aver that doubt is a crime, then I attack them one and all, because they enslave the minds of men.

I attack the monsters, the phantoms of imagination that have ruled the world. I attack slavery. I ask for room—room for the human mind.

Why should we sacrifice a real world that we have for one we know not of? Why should we enslave ourselves? Why should we forge fetters for our own hands? Why should we be the slaves of phantoms. The darkness of barbarism was the womb of these shadows. In the light of science they cannot cloud the sky forever. They have reddened the hands of man with innocent blood.

They made the cradle a curse, and the grave a place of torment.

They blinded the eyes and stopped the ears of the human race. They subverted all ideas of justice by promising infinite rewards for finite virtues, and threatening infinite punishment for finite offences.

They filled the future with heavens and with hells, with the shining peaks of selfish joy and the lurid abysses of flame. For ages they kept the world in ignorance and awe, in want and misery, in fear and chains.

I plead for light, for air, for opportunity. I plead for individual independence. I plead for the rights of labour and of thought. I plead for a chainless future. Let the ghosts go—justice remains. Let them disappear—men and women and children are left. Let the monsters fade away—the world is here with its hills and seas and plains, with its seasons of smiles and frowns; its spring of leaf and bud; its summer of shade and flower and murmuring stream; its autumn with the laden boughs, when the withered banners of the corn are still, and gathered fields are growing strangely wan; while death, poetic death, with hands that colour what they

touch, weaves in the autumn wood her tapestries of gold and brown.

The world remains with its winters and homes and firesides, where grow and bloom the virtues of our race. All these are left; and music, with its sad and thrilling voice, and all there is of art and song and hope and love and aspiration high. All these remain. Let the ghosts go—we will worship them no more.

Man is greater than these phantoms. Humanity is grander than all the creeds, than all the books. Humanity is the great sea, and these creeds, and books, and religions are but the waves of a day. Humanity is the sky, and these religions and dogmas and theories are but the mists and clouds changing continually, destined finally to melt away.

That which is founded upon slavery, and fear, and ignorance cannot endure. In the religion of the future there will be men and women and children, all the aspirations of the soul, and all the tender humanities of the heart.

Let the ghosts go. We will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands, and fade forever from the imaginations of men.

HOW TO REFORM MANKIND

I.

"THERE is no darkness but ignorance." Every human being is a necessary product of conditions, and every one is born with defects for which he cannot be held responsible. Nature seems to care nothing for the individual, nothing for the species.

Life pursuing life, and in its turn pursued by death, presses to the snow-line of the possible, and every form of life, of instinct, thought, and action is fixed and determined by conditions, by countless antecedent and co-existing facts. The present is the child, and the necessary child, of all the past, and the mother of all the future.

Every human being longs to be happy, to satisfy the wants of the body with food, with roof, and raiment, and to feed the hunger of the mind, according to his capacity, with love, wisdom, philosophy, art, and song.

The wants of the savage are few ; but with civilisation the wants of the body increase, the intellectual horizon widens, and the brain demands more and more.

The savage feels, but scarcely thinks. The passion of the savage is uninfluenced by his thought, while the thought of the philosopher is uninfluenced by passion. Children have wants and passions before they are capable of reasoning. So, in the infancy of the race, wants and passions dominate.

The savage was controlled by appearances, by impressions ; he was mentally weak, mentally indolent, and his mind pursued the path of least resistance. Things were to him as they appeared to be. He was a natural believer in the

supernatural, and, finding himself beset by dangers and evils, he sought in many ways the aid of unseen powers. His children followed his example, and for many ages, in many lands, millions and millions of human beings, many of them the kindest and the best, asked for supernatural help. Countless altars and temples have been built, and the supernatural has been worshipped with sacrifice and song, with self-denial, ceremony, thankfulness, and prayer.

During all these ages the brain of man was being slowly and painfully developed. Gradually mind came to the assistance of muscle, and thought became the friend of labour. Man has advanced just in the proportion that he has mingled thought with his work, just in the proportion that he has succeeded in getting his head and hands into partnership. All this was the result of experience.

Nature, generous and heartless, extravagant and miserly as she is, is our mother and our only teacher, and she is also the deceiver of men. Above her we cannot rise, below her we cannot fall. In her we find the seed and soil of all that is good, of all that is evil. Nature originates, nourishes, preserves, and destroys.

Good deeds bear fruit, and in the fruit are seeds that in their turn bear fruit and seeds. Great thoughts are never lost, and words of kindness do not perish from the earth.

Every brain is a field where nature sows the seeds of thought, and the crop depends upon the soil.

Every flower that gives its fragrance to the wandering air leaves its influence on the soul of man. The wheel and swoop

of the winged creatures of the air suggest the flowing lines of subtle art. The roar and murmur of the restless sea, the cataract's solemn chant, the thunder's voice, the happy babble of the brook, the whispering leaves, the thrilling notes of mating birds, the sighing winds, taught man to pour his heart in song, and gave a voice to grief and hope, to love and death.

In all that is, in mountain range and billowed plain, in winding stream and desert sand, in cloud and star, in snow and rain, in calm and storm, in night and day, in woods and vales, in all the colours of divided light, in all there is of growth and life, decay and death, in all that flies, and floats, and swims, in all that moves, in all the forms and qualities of things, man found the seeds and symbols of his thoughts; and all that man has wrought becomes a part of nature's self, forming the lives of those to be. The marbles of the Greeks, like strains of music, suggest the perfect, and teach the melody of life. The great poems, paintings, inventions, theories, and philosophies enlarge and mould the mind of man. All that is, is natural. All is naturally produced. Beyond the horizon of the natural man cannot go.

Yet, for many ages, man in all directions has relied upon, and sincerely believed in, the existence of the supernatural. He did not believe in the uniformity of nature; he had no conception of cause and effect, of the indestructibility of force.

In medicine he believed in charms, magic, amulets, and incantations. It never occurred to the savage that diseases were natural.

In chemistry he sought for the elixir of life, for the philosopher's stone, and for some way of changing the baser metals into gold.

In mechanics he searched for perpetual motion, believing that he, by some curious combinations of levers, could produce, could create a force.

In government, he found the source of authority in the will of the supernatural.

For many centuries his only conception of morality was the idea of obedience, not to facts as they exist in nature, but to the supposed command of some being superior to nature. During all these years religion consisted in the praise and worship of the invisible and infinite, of some vast and incomprehensible power—that is to say, of the supernatural.

By experience, by experiment, possibly by accident, man found that some diseases could be cured by natural means; that he could be relieved in many instances of pain by certain kinds of leaves or bark.

This was the beginning. Gradually his confidence increased in the direction of the natural, and began to decrease in charms and amulets. The war was waged for many centuries, but the natural gained the victory. Now we know that all diseases are naturally produced, and that all remedies, all curatives, act in accordance with the facts in nature. Now we know that charms, magic, amulets, and incantations are just as useless in the practice of medicine as they would be in solving a problem in mathematics. We now know that there are no supernatural remedies.

In chemistry the war was long and bitter; but we now no longer seek for the elixir of life, and no one is trying to find the philosopher's stone. We are satisfied that there is nothing supernatural in all the realm of chemistry. We know that substances are always true to their natures; we know that just so many atoms of one substance will unite with just so many of another. The miraculous has departed from chemistry; in that science there is no magic, no caprice, and no possible use for the supernatural. We are satisfied that there can be no change, that we can absolutely rely on the uniformity of nature, that the attraction of gravitation will always remain the same, and we feel that we know this as certainly as we know that the relation between the diameter and circumference of a circle can never change.

We now know that in mechanics the

natural is supreme. We know that man can by no possibility create a force, that by no possibility can he destroy a force. No mechanic dreams of depending upon, or asking for, any supernatural aid. He knows that he works in accordance with certain facts that no power can change.

So we in the United States believe that the authority to govern, the authority to make and execute laws, comes from the consent of the governed and not from any supernatural source. We do not believe that the king occupied his throne because of the will of the supernatural. Neither do we believe that others are subjects, or serfs, or slaves by reason of any supernatural will.

So our ideas of morality have changed, and millions now believe that whatever produces happiness and well-being is, in the highest sense, moral. Unreasoning obedience is not the foundation or the essence of morality. That is the result of mental slavery. To act in accordance with obligation perceived is to be free and noble. To simply obey is to practise what might be called a slave virtue ; but real morality is the flower and fruit of liberty and wisdom.

There are very many who have reached the conclusion that the supernatural has nothing to do with real religion. Religion does not consist in believing without evidence or against evidence. It does not consist in worshipping the unknown, or in trying to do something for the Infinite. Ceremonies, prayers, and inspired books, miracles, special providence, and divine interference, all belong to the supernatural, and form no part of real religion.

Every science rests on the natural, on demonstrated facts. So morality and religion must find their foundations in the necessary nature of things.

II.

HOW CAN WE REFORM THE WORLD?

Ignorance being darkness, what we need is intellectual light. The most important things to teach, as the basis of

all progress, are that the universe is natural ; that man must be the providence of man ; that, by the development of the brain, we can avoid some of the dangers, some of the evils, overcome some of the obstructions, and take advantage of some of the facts and forces of nature ; that, by invention and industry, we can supply, to a reasonable degree, the wants of the body, and by thought, study, and effort we can, in part, satisfy the hunger of the mind.

Man should cease to expect any aid from any supernatural source. By this time he should be satisfied that worship has not created wealth, and that prosperity is not the child of prayer. He should know that the supernatural has not succoured the oppressed, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, shielded the innocent, stayed the pestilence, or freed the slave.

Being satisfied that the supernatural does not exist, man should turn his entire attention to the affairs of this world, to the facts in nature.

And, first of all, he should avoid waste—waste of energy, waste of wealth. Every good man, every good woman, should try to do away with war, to stop the appeal to savage force. Man, in a savage state, relies upon his strength, and decides for himself what is right and what is wrong. Civilised men do not settle their differences by a resort to arms. They submit the quarrel to arbitrators and courts. This is the great difference between the savage and the civilised. Nations, however, sustain the relations of savages to each other. There is no way of settling their disputes. Each nation decides for itself, and each nation endeavours to carry its decision into effect. This produces war. Thousands of men at this moment are trying to invent more deadly weapons to destroy their fellow-men. For eighteen hundred years peace has been preached, and yet the civilised nations are the most warlike of the world. There are in Europe to-day between eleven and twelve millions of soldiers, ready to take the field, and the frontiers of every civilised

nation are protected by breastwork and fort. The sea is covered with steel-clad ships, filled with missiles of death. The civilised world has impoverished itself, and the debt of Christendom, mostly for war, is now nearly thirty thousand million dollars. The interest on this vast sum has to be paid; it has to be paid by labour, much of it by the poor, by those who are compelled to deny themselves almost the necessities of life. This debt is growing year by year. There must come a change, or Christendom will become bankrupt.

The interest on this debt amounts, at least, to nine hundred million dollars a year, and the cost of supporting armies and navies, of repairing ships, of manufacturing new engines of death, probably amounts, including the interest on the debt, to at least six million dollars a day. Allowing ten hours for a day—that is, for a working day—the waste of war is at least six hundred thousand dollars an hour—that is to say, ten thousand dollars a minute.

Think of all this being paid for the purpose of killing and preparing to kill our fellow-men. Think of the good that could be done with this vast sum of money; the schools that could be built, the wants that could be supplied. Think of the homes it would build, the children it would clothe.

If we wish to do away with war, we must provide for the settlement of national differences by an international court. This court should be in perpetual session; its members should be selected by the various Governments to be affected by its decisions, and, at the command and disposal of this court, the rest of Christendom being disarmed, there should be a military force sufficient to carry its judgments into effect. There should be no other excuse, no other business for an army or a navy in the civilised world.

No man has imagination enough to paint the agonies, the horrors, and cruelties of war. Think of sending shot and shell crashing through the bodies of men! Think of the widows and orphans!

Think of the maimed, the mutilated, the mangled!

III.

ANOTHER WASTE.

Let us be perfectly candid with each other. We are seeking the truth, trying to find what ought to be done to increase the well-being of man. I must give you my honest thought. You have the right to demand it, and I must maintain the integrity of my soul.

There is another direction in which the wealth and energies of man are wasted. From the beginning of history until now man has been seeking the aid of the supernatural. For many centuries the wealth of the world was used to propitiate the unseen powers. In our own country the property dedicated to this purpose is worth at least one thousand million dollars. The interest on this sum is fifty million dollars a year, and the cost of employing persons, whose business it is to seek the aid of the supernatural, and to maintain the property, is certainly as much more. So that the cost in our country is about two million dollars a week, and, counting ten hours as a working day, this amounts to about five hundred dollars a minute.

For this vast amount of money the returns are remarkably small. The good accomplished does not appear to be great. There is no great diminution in crime. The decrease of immorality and poverty is hardly perceptible. In spite, however, of the apparent failure here, a vast sum of money is expended every year to carry our ideas of the supernatural to other races. Our churches, for the most part, are closed during the week, being used only a part of one day in seven. No one wishes to destroy churches or Church organisations. The only desire is that they shall accomplish substantial good for the world. In many of our small towns, towns of three or four thousand people, will be found four or five churches, sometimes more. These churches are founded upon immaterial differences—a difference as to the mode

of baptism, a difference as to who shall be entitled to partake of the Lord's supper, a difference of ceremony, of government, a difference about foreordination, a difference about fate and free-will. And it must be admitted that all the arguments on all sides of these differences have been presented countless millions of times. Upon these subjects nothing new is produced or anticipated, and yet the discussion is maintained by the repetition of the old arguments.

Now, it seems to me that it would be far better for the people of a town, having a population of four or five thousand, to have one church; and the edifice should be of use, not only on Sunday, but on every day of the week. In this building should be the library of the town. It should be the club-house of the people, where they could find the principal newspapers and periodicals of the world. Its auditorium should be like a theatre. Plays should be presented by home talent, an orchestra formed, music cultivated. The people should meet there at any time they desire. The women could carry their knitting and sewing, and connected with it should be rooms for the playing of games, billiards, cards, and chess. Everything should be made as agreeable as possible. The citizens should take pride in this building. They should adorn its niches with statues, and its walls with pictures. It should be the intellectual centre. They could employ a gentleman of ability, possibly of genius, to address them on Sundays on subjects that would be of real interest, of real importance. They could say to this minister:—

"We are engaged in business during the week; while we are working at our trades and professions we want you to study, and on Sunday tell us what you have found out."

Let such a minister take for a series of sermons the history, the philosophy, the art, and the genius of the Greeks. Let him tell of the wondrous metaphysics, myths, and religions of India and Egypt. Let him make his congrega-

tion conversant with the philosophies of the world, with the great thinkers, the great poets, the great artists, the great actors, the great orators, the great inventors, the captains of industry, the soldiers of progress. Let them have a Sunday school in which the children shall be made acquainted with the facts of nature, with botany, entomology, something of geology and astronomy.

Let them be made familiar with the greatest of poems, the finest paragraphs of literature, with stories of the heroic, the self-denying, and generous.

Now, it seems to me that such a congregation in a few years would become the most intelligent people in the United States.

The truth is that people are tired of the old theories. They have lost confidence in the miraculous, in the supernatural, and they have ceased to take interest in "facts" that they do not quite believe.

"There is no darkness but ignorance."

There is no light but intelligence.

As often as we can exchange a mistake for a fact, a falsehood for a truth, we advance. We add to the intellectual wealth of the world, and in this way, and in this way alone, can be laid the foundation for the future prosperity and civilisation of the race.

I blame no one; I call in question the motives of no person; I admit that the world has acted as it must.

But hope for the future depends upon the intelligence of the present. Man must husband his resources. He must not waste his energies in endeavouring to accomplish the impossible.

He must take advantage of the forces of nature. He must depend on education, on what he can ascertain by the use of his senses, by observation, by experiment and reason. He must break the chains of prejudice and custom. He must be free to express his thoughts on all questions. He must find the conditions of happiness, and become wise enough to live in accordance with them.

IV.

HOW CAN WE LESSEN CRIME?

In spite of all that has been done for the reformation of the world, in spite of all the inventions, in spite of all the forces of nature that are now the tireless slaves of man, in spite of all improvements in agriculture, in mechanics, in every department of human labour, the world is still cursed with poverty and with crime.

The prisons are full, the courts are crowded, the officers of the law are busy, and there seems to be no material decrease in crime.

For many thousands of years man has endeavoured to reform his fellow-men by imprisonment, torture, mutilation, and death, and yet the history of the world shows that there has been, and is, no reforming power in punishment. It is impossible to make the penalty great enough, horrible enough, to lessen crime.

Only a few years ago, in civilised countries, larceny and many offences even below larceny were punished by death; and yet the number of thieves and criminals of all grades increased. Traitors were hanged and quartered or drawn into fragments by horses, and yet treason flourished.

Most of these frightful laws have been repealed, and the repeal certainly did not increase crime. In our own country we rely upon the gallows, the penitentiary, and the jail. When a murder is committed the man is hanged, shocked to death by electricity, or lynched, and in a few minutes a new murderer is ready to suffer a like fate. Men steal; they are sent to the penitentiary for a certain number of years, treated like wild beasts, frequently tortured. At the end of the term they are discharged, having only enough money to return to the place from which they were sent. They are thrown upon the world without means, without friends—they are convicts. They are shunned, suspected, and despised. If they obtain a place, they are discharged as soon as it is found that they were in

prison. They do the best they can to retain the respect of their fellow-men by denying their imprisonment and their identity. In a little while, unable to gain a living by honest means, they resort to crime, they again appear in court, and again are taken within the dungeon walls. No reformation, no chance to reform, nothing to give them bread while making new friends.

All this is infamous. Men should not be sent to the penitentiary as a punishment, because we must remember that men do as they must. Nature does not frequently produce the perfect. In the human race there is a large percentage of failures. Under certain conditions, with certain appetites and passions, and with a certain quality, quantity, and shape of brain, men will become thieves, forgers, and counterfeits. The question is whether reformation is possible, whether a change can be produced in the person by producing a change in the conditions. The criminal is dangerous, and society has the right to protect itself. The criminal should be confined, and, if possible, should be reformed. A penitentiary should be a school; the convicts should be educated. So prisoners should work, and they should be paid a reasonable sum for their labour. The best men should have charge of prisons. They should be philanthropists and philosophers; they should know something of human nature. The prisoner, having been taught, we will say, for five years—taught the underlying principles of conduct, of the naturalness and harmony of virtue, of the discord of crime, having been convinced that society has no hatred, that nobody wishes to punish, to degrade, or to rob him, and being at the time of his discharge paid a reasonable price for his labour, being allowed by law to change his name so that his identity will not be preserved, he could go out of the prison a friend of the government. He would have the feeling that he had been made a better man; that he had been treated with justice, with mercy; and the money

he carried with him would be a breastwork behind which he could defy temptation, a breastwork that would support and take care of him until he could find some means by which to support himself. And this man, instead of making crime a business, would become a good, honourable, and useful citizen.

As it is now, there is but little reform. The same faces appear again and again at the bar; the same men hear again and again the verdict of guilty and the sentence of the court, and the same men return again and again to the prison cell. Murderers, those belonging to the dangerous classes, those who are so formed by nature that they rush to the crimes of desperation, should be imprisoned for life, or they should be put upon some island, some place where they can be guarded, where it may be that by proper effort they could support themselves; the men on one island, the women on another. And to these islands should be sent professional criminals, those who have deliberately adopted a life of crime for the purpose of supporting themselves; the women upon one island, the men upon another. Such people should not populate the earth.

Neither the diseases nor the deformities of the mind or body should be perpetuated. Life at the fountain should not be polluted.

V.

HOMES FOR ALL.

The home is the unit of the nation. The more homes, the broader the foundation of the nation, and the more secure.

Everything that is possible should be done to keep this from being a nation of tenants. The men who cultivate the earth should own it. Something has already been done in our country in that direction, and probably in every State there is a homestead exemption: This exemption has thus far done no harm to the creditor class. When we imprisoned people for debt, debts were as insecure, to say the least, as now. By the homestead laws, a home of a certain value, or

of a certain extent, is exempt from forced levy or sale; and these laws have done great good. Undoubtedly they have trebled the homes of the nation.

There is another question in which I take great interest, and it ought, in my judgment, to be answered by the intelligence and kindness of our century.

We all know that, for many, many ages, men have been slaves, and we all know that during all these years women have, to some extent, been the slaves of slaves. It is of the utmost importance to the human race that women, that mothers, should be free. Without doubt, the contract of marriage is the most important and the most sacred that human beings can make. Marriage is the most important of all institutions. Of course, the ceremony of marriage is not the real marriage. It is only evidence of the mutual flames that burn within. There can be no real marriage without mutual love. So I believe in the ceremony of marriage; that it should be public; that records should be kept. Besides, the ceremony says to all the world that those who marry are in love with each other.

Then arises the question of divorce. Millions of people imagine that the married are joined together by some supernatural power, and that they should remain together, or at least married, during life. If all who have been married were joined together by the supernatural, we must admit that the supernatural is not infinitely wise.

After all, marriage is a contract, and the parties to the contract are bound to keep its provisions; and neither should be released from such a contract unless, in some way, the interests of society are involved. I would have the law so that any husband could obtain a divorce when the wife had persistently and flagrantly violated the contract; such divorce to be granted on equitable terms. I would give the wife a divorce if she requested it, if she wanted it.

And I would do this, not only for her sake, but for the sake of the community, of the nation. All children should be

children of love. All that are born should be sincerely welcomed. The children of mothers who dislike, or hate, or loathe the fathers, will fill the world with insanity and crime. No woman should, by law, or by public opinion, be forced to live with a man whom she abhors. There is no danger of demoralising the world through divorce. Neither is there any danger of destroying in the human heart that divine thing called love. As long as the human race exists, men and women will love each other, and just so long there will be true and perfect marriage. Slavery is not the soil or rain of virtue.

I make a difference between granting divorce to a man and to a woman, and for this reason: A woman dowers her husband with her youth and beauty. He should not be allowed to desert her because she has grown wrinkled and old. Her capital is gone; her prospects in life lessened; while, on the contrary, he may be far better able to succeed than when he married her. As a rule, the man can take care of himself, and, as a rule, the woman needs help. So, I would not allow him to cast her off unless she had flagrantly violated the contract. But, for the sake of the community, and especially for the sake of the babes, I would give her a divorce for the asking.

There will never be a generation of great men until there has been a generation of free women—of free mothers.

The tenderest word in our language is maternity. In this word is the divine mingling of ecstasy and agony, of love and self-sacrifice. This word is holy!

VI.

THE LABOUR QUESTION.

There has been for many years ceaseless discussion upon what is called the labour question—the conflict between the working man and the capitalist. Many ways have been devised, some experiments have been tried, for the purpose of solving this question. Profit-sharing would not work, because it is

impossible to share profits with those who are incapable of sharing losses. Communities have been formed, the object being to pay the expenses and share the profits among all the persons belonging to the society. For the most part these have failed.

Others have advocated arbitration. And, while it may be that the employers could be bound by the decision of the arbitrators, there has been no way discovered by which the employees could be held by such decision. In other words, the question has not been solved.

For my own part, I see no final and satisfactory solution except through the civilisation of employers and employed. The question is so complicated, the ramifications are so countless, that a solution by law, or by force, seems at least improbable. Employers are supposed to pay according to their profits. They may or may not. Profits may be destroyed by competition. The employer is at the mercy of other employers, and as much so as his employees are at his mercy. The employers cannot govern prices, they cannot fix demand, they cannot control supply; and at present, in the world of trade, the laws of supply and demand, except when interfered with by conspiracy, are in absolute control.

Will the time arrive, and can it arrive, except by developing the brain, except by the aid of intellectual light, when the purchaser will wish to give what a thing is worth, when the employer will be satisfied with a reasonable profit, when the employer will be anxious to give the real value for raw material; when he will be really anxious to pay the labourer the full value of his labour? Will the employer ever become civilised enough to know that the law of supply and demand should not absolutely apply in the labour market of the world? Will he ever become civilised enough not to take advantage of the necessities of the poor, of the hunger, and rags, and want of poverty? Will he ever become civilised enough to say: "I will pay the

man who labours for me enough to give him a reasonable support, enough for him to assist in taking care of wife and children, enough for him to do this, and lay aside something to feed and clothe him when old age comes—to lay aside something, enough to give him house and hearth during the December of his life, so that he can warm his worn and shrivelled hands at the fire of his home”?

Of course, capital can do nothing without the assistance of labour. All there is of value in the world is the product of labour. The labouring man pays all the expenses. No matter whether taxes are laid on luxuries or on the necessities of life, labour pays every cent.

So we must remember that, day by day, labour is becoming intelligent. So, I believe, the employer is gradually becoming civilised, gradually becoming kinder; and many men who have made large fortunes from the labour of their fellows have given of their millions to what they regarded as objects of charity, or for the interests of education. This is a kind of penance, because the men that have made this money from the brain and muscle of their fellow-men have ever felt that it was not quite their own. Many of these employers have sought to balance their accounts by leaving something for universities, for the establishment of libraries, drinking fountains, or to build monuments to departed greatness. It would have been, I think, far better had they used this money to better the condition of the men who really earned it.

So, I think, that, when we become civilised, great corporations will make provision for men who have given their lives to their service. I think the great railroads should pay pensions to their worn-out employees. They should take care of them in old age. They should not maim and wear out their servants and then discharge them, and allow them to be supported in poor-houses. These great companies should take care of the men they maim; they should look out

for the ones whose lives they have used, and whose labour has been the foundation of their prosperity. Upon this question public sentiment should be aroused to such a degree that these corporations would be ashamed to use a human life and throw away the broken old man as they would cast aside a rotten tie.

It may be that the mechanics, the working men, will finally become intelligent enough to really unite, to act in absolute concert. Could this be accomplished, then a reasonable rate of compensation could be fixed and enforced. Now such efforts are local, and the result up to this time has been failure. But, if all could unite, they could obtain what is reasonable, what is just, and they would have the sympathy of a very large majority of their fellow-men, provided they were reasonable.

But, before they can act in this way, they must become really intelligent—intelligent enough to know what is reasonable, and honest enough to ask for no more.

So much has already been accomplished for the working man that I have hope, and great hope, of the future. The hours of labour have been shortened, and materially shortened, in many countries. There was a time when men worked fifteen and sixteen hours a day. Now, generally, a day's work is not longer than ten hours, and the tendency is to still further decrease the hours.

By comparing long periods of time, we more clearly perceive the advance that has been made. In 1860 the average amount earned by the labouring men, workmen, mechanics, per year, was about two hundred and eighty-five dollars. It is now about five hundred dollars, and a dollar to-day will purchase more of the necessities of life, more food, clothing, and fuel, than it would in 1860. These facts are full of hope for the future.

All our sympathies should be with the men who work, who toil; for the women who labour themselves, and children.

because we know that labour is the foundation of all, and that those who labour are the Caryatides that support the structure and glittering dome of civilisation and progress.

VII.

EDUCATE THE CHILDREN.

Every child should be taught to be self-supporting, and every one should be taught to avoid being a burden on others as they would shun death.

Every child should be taught that the useful are the honourable, and that they who live on the labour of others are the enemies of society. Every child should be taught that useful work is worship, and that intelligent labour is the highest form of prayer.

Children should be taught to think, to investigate, to rely upon the light of reason, of observation and experience; should be taught to use all their senses; and they should be taught only that which, in some sense, is really useful. They should be taught the use of tools, to use their hands, to embody their thoughts in the construction of things. Their lives should not be wasted in the acquisition of the useless, or of the almost useless. Years should not be devoted to the acquisition of dead languages, or to the study of history, which, for the most part, is a detailed account of things that never occurred. It is useless to fill the minds with dates of great battles, with the births and deaths of kings. They should be taught the philosophy of history, the growth of nations, of philosophies, theories, and, above all, of the sciences.

So, they should be taught the importance, not only of financial, but of mental honesty; to be absolutely sincere; to utter their real thoughts, and to give their actual opinions. And, if parents want honest children, they should be honest themselves. It may be that hypocrites transmit their failing to their offspring. Men and women who pretend to agree with the majority, who think

one way and talk another, can hardly expect their children to be absolutely sincere.

Nothing should be taught in any school that the teacher does not know. Beliefs, superstitions, theories, should not be treated like demonstrated facts. The child should be taught to investigate, not to believe. Too much doubt is better than too much credulity. So, children should be taught that it is their duty to think for themselves, to understand, and, if possible, to know.

Real education is the hope of the future. The development of the brain, the civilisation of the heart, will drive want and crime from the world. The school-house is the real cathedral, and science the only possible saviour of the human race. Education, real education, is the friend of honesty, of morality, of temperance.

We cannot rely upon legislative enactments to make people wise and good, neither can we expect to make human beings manly and womanly by keeping them out of temptation. Temptations are as thick as the leaves of the forest, and no one can be out of the reach of temptation unless he is dead. The great thing is to make people intelligent enough, and strong enough, not to keep away from temptation, but to resist it. All the forces of civilisation are in favour of morality and temperance. Little can be accomplished by law, because law, for the most part, about such things, is a destruction of personal liberty. Liberty cannot be sacrificed for the sake of temperance, for the sake of morality, or for the sake of anything. It is of more value than everything else. Yet some people would destroy the sun to prevent the growth of weeds. Liberty sustains the same relation to all the virtues that the sun does to life. The world had better go back to barbarism, to the dens, the caves, and lairs of savagery; better lose all art, all inventions, than to lose liberty. Liberty is the breath of progress; it is the seed and soil, the heat and rain, of love and joy.

So, all should be taught that the highest ambition is to be happy, and to add to the well-being of others; that place and power are not necessary to success; that the desire to acquire great wealth is a kind of insanity. They should be taught that it is a waste of energy, a waste of thought, a waste of life, to acquire what you do not need, and what you do not really use for the benefit of yourself or others.

Neither mendicants nor millionaires are the happiest of mankind. The man at the bottom of the ladder hopes to rise, the man at the top fears to fall. The one asks, the other refuses; and, by frequent refusal, the heart becomes hard enough, and the hand greedy enough, to clutch and hold.

Few men have intelligence enough, real greatness enough, to own a great fortune. As a rule, the fortune owns them. Their fortune is their master, for whom they work and toil like slaves. The man who has a good business, and who can make a reasonable living and lay aside something for the future, who can educate his children, and can leave enough to keep the wolf of want from the door of those he loves, ought to be the happiest of men.

Now, society bows and kneels at the feet of wealth. Wealth gives power. Wealth commands flattery and adulation. And so, millions of men give all their energies, as well as their very souls, for the acquisition of gold. And this will continue as long as society is ignorant enough, and hypocritical enough, to hold in high esteem the man of wealth without the slightest regard to the character of the man.

In judging of the rich, two things should be considered: How did they get it, and what are they going to do with it? Was it honestly acquired? Is it being used for the benefit of mankind? When people become really intelligent, when the brain is really developed, no human being will give his life to the acquisition of what he does not need, or what he cannot intelligently use.

The time will come when the truly intelligent man cannot be happy, cannot be satisfied, when millions of his fellow-men are hungry and naked. The time will come when in every heart will be the perfume of pity's sacred flower. The time will come when the world will be anxious to ascertain the truth, to find out the conditions of happiness, and to live in accordance with such conditions; and the time will come when in the brain of every human being will be the climate of intellectual hospitality.

Man will be civilised when the passions are dominated by the intellect, when reason occupies the throne, and when the hot blood of passion no longer rises in successful revolt.

To civilise the world, to hasten the coming of the Golden Dawn of the Perfect Day, we must educate the children, we must commence at the cradle, at the lap of the loving mother.

VIII.

WE MUST WORK AND WAIT.

The reforms that I have mentioned cannot be accomplished in a day, possibly not for many centuries; and in the meantime there is much crime, much poverty, much want, and, consequently, something must be done now.

Let each human being, within the limits of the possible, be self-supporting; let everyone take intelligent thought for the morrow; and if a human being supports himself and acquires a surplus, let him use a part of that surplus for the unfortunate, and let each one, to the extent of his ability, help his fellow-men. Let him do what he can in the circle of his own acquaintance to rescue the fallen, to help those who are trying to help themselves, to give work to the idle. Let him distribute kind words, words of wisdom, of cheerfulness, and hope. In other words, let every human being do all the good he can, and let him bind up the wounds of his fellow-creatures, and at the same time put forth every effort to hasten the coming of a better day.

This, in my judgment, is real religion. To do all the good you can is to be a saint in the highest and in the noblest sense. To do all the good you can, this is to be really and truly spiritual. To relieve suffering, to put the star of hope in the midnight of despair, this is true holiness. This is the religion of science. The old creeds are too narrow; they are not for the world in which we live. The old dogmas lack breadth and tenderness; they are too cruel, too merciless, too savage. We are growing grander and nobler.

The firmament inlaid with suns is the dome of the real cathedral. The inter-

preters of nature are the true and only priests. In the great creed are all the truths that lips have uttered, and in the real litany will be found all the ecstasies and aspirations of the soul, all dreams of joy, all hopes for nobler, fuller life. The real church, the real edifice, is adorned and glorified with all that Art has done. In the real choir is all the thrilling music of the world, and in the star-lit aisles have been, and are, the grandest souls of every land and clime.

"There is no darkness but ignorance."

Let us flood the world with intellectual light.

ART AND MORALITY

ART is the highest form of expression, and exists for the sake of expression. Through art thoughts become visible. Back of forms are the desire, the longing, the brooding creative instinct, the maternity of mind, and the passion that gives pose and swell, outline and colour.

Of course, there is no such thing as absolute beauty or absolute morality. We now clearly perceive that beauty and conduct are relative. We have outgrown the provincialism that thought is back of substance, as well as the old Platonic absurdity that ideas existed before the subjects of thought. So far, at least, as man is concerned, his thoughts have been produced by his surroundings, by the action and interaction of things upon his mind; and, so far as man is concerned, things have preceded thoughts. The impressions that these things make upon us are what we know of them. The absolute is beyond the human mind. Our knowledge is confined to the relations that exist between the totality of things that we call the universe and the effect upon ourselves.

Actions are deemed right or wrong according to experience and the conclusions of reason. Things are beautiful by the relation that certain forms, colours, and modes of expression bear to us. At the foundation of the beautiful will be found the fact of happiness, the gratification of the senses, the delight of intellectual discovery, and the surprise and thrill of appreciation. That which we call the beautiful wakens into life through the association of ideas, of memories, of experiences, of suggestions, of pleasure past, and the perception that the prophecies of the ideal have been, and will be, fulfilled.

Art cultivates and kindles the imagination, and quickens the conscience. It is by imagination that we put ourselves in the place of another. When the wings of that faculty are folded, the master does not put himself in the place of the slave; the tyrant is not locked in the dungeon, chained with his victim. The inquisitor did not feel the flames that devoured the martyr. The imaginative man, giving to the beggar, gives

to himself. Those who feel indignant at the perpetration of wrong feel for the instant that they are the victims ; and, when they attack the aggressor, they feel that they are defending themselves. Love and pity are the children of the imagination.

Our fathers read with great approbation the mechanical sermons in rhyme written by Milton, Young, and Pollok. Those theological poets wrote for the purpose of convincing their readers that the mind of man is diseased, filled with infirmities, and that poetic poultices and plasters tend to purify and strengthen the moral nature of the human race. Nothing to the true artist, to the real genius, is so contemptible as the "medicinal view."

Poems were written to prove that the practice of virtue was an investment for another world, and that whoever followed the advice found in those solemn, insincere, and lugubrious rhymes, although he might be exceedingly unhappy in this world, would, with great certainty, be rewarded in the next. These writers assumed that there was a kind of relation between rhyme and religion, between verse and virtue, and that it was their duty to call the attention of the world to all the snares and pitfalls of pleasure. They wrote with a purpose. They had a distinct moral end in view. They had a plan. They were missionaries, and their object was to show the world how wicked it was, and how good they, the writers, were. They could not conceive of a man being so happy that everything in nature partook of his feeling ; that all the birds were singing for him, and singing by reason of his joy ; that everything sparkled, and shone, and moved in the glad rhythm of his heart. They could not appreciate this feeling. They could not think of this joy guiding the artist's hand, seeking expression in form and colour. They did not look upon poems, pictures, and statues as results, as children of the brain fathered by sea and sky, by flower and star, by love and light. They were not moved by gladness.

They felt the responsibility of perpetual duty. They had a desire to teach, to sermonise, to point out and exaggerate the faults of others, and to describe the virtues practised by themselves. Art becomes a colporteur, a distributor of tracts, a mendicant missionary, whose highest ambition was to suppress all heathen joy.

Happy people were supposed to have forgotten, in a reckless moment, duty and responsibility. True poetry would call them back to a realisation of their meanness and their misery. It was the skeleton at the feast, the rattle of whose bones had a rhythmic sound. It was the forefinger of warning and doom held up in the presence of a smile.

These moral poets taught the "unwelcome truths," and by the paths of life put posts on which they painted hands pointing at graves. They loved to see the pallor on the cheek of youth, while they talked, in solemn tones, of age, decrepitude, and lifeless clay.

Before the eyes of love they thrust, with eager hands, the skull of death. They crushed the flowers beneath their feet, and plaited crowns of thorns for every brow.

According to these poets, happiness was inconsistent with virtue. The sense of infinite obligation should be perpetually present. They assumed an attitude of superiority. They denounced and calumniated the reader. They enjoyed his confusion when charged with total depravity. They loved to paint the sufferings of the lost, the worthlessness of human life, the littleness of mankind, and the beauties of an unknown world. They knew but little of the heart. They did not know that without passion there is no virtue, and that the really passionate are the virtuous.

Art has nothing to do directly with morality or immorality. It is its own excuse for being ; it exists for itself.

The artist who endeavours to enforce a lesson becomes a preacher ; and the artist who tries, by hint and suggestion, to enforce the immoral becomes a pander.

There is an infinite difference between the nude and the naked, between the natural and the undressed. In the presence of the pure, unconscious nude, nothing can be more contemptible than those forms in which are the hints and suggestions of drapery, the pretence of exposure, and the failure to conceal. The undressed is vulgar—the nude is pure.

The old Greek statues, frankly, proudly nude, whose free and perfect limbs have never known the sacrilege of clothes, were, and are, as free from taint, as pure, as stainless, as the image of the morning star trembling in a drop of perfumed dew.

Morality is the harmony between act and circumstance. It is the melody of conduct. A wonderful statue is the melody of proportion. A great picture is the melody of form and colour. A great statue does not suggest labour; it seems to have been created as a joy. A great painting suggests no weariness and no effort; the greater, the easier it seems. So a great and splendid life seems to have been without effort. There is in it no idea of obligation, no idea of responsibility or of duty. The idea of duty changes to a kind of drudgery that which should be, in the perfect man, a perfect pleasure.

The artist, working simply for the sake of enforcing a moral, becomes a labourer. The freedom of genius is lost, and the artist is absorbed in the citizen. The soul of the real artist should be moved by this melody of proportion as the body is unconsciously swayed by the rhythm of a symphony. No one can imagine that the great men who chiselled the statues of antiquity intended to teach the youth of Greece to be obedient to their parents. We cannot believe that Michael Angelo painted his grotesque and somewhat vulgar "Day of Judgment" for the purpose of reforming Italian thieves. The subject was, in all probability, selected by his employer, and the treatment was a question of art, without the slightest reference to the moral effect, even upon priests. We are

perfectly certain that Corot painted those infinitely poetic landscapes, those cottages, those sad poplars, those leafless vines on weather-tinted walls, those quiet pools, those contented cattle, those fields flecked with light, over which bend the skies, tender as the breast of a mother, without once thinking of the Ten Commandments. There is the same difference between moral art and the product of true genius as there is between prudery and virtue.

The novelists who endeavour to enforce what they are pleased to call "moral truths" cease to be artists. They create two kinds of characters—types and caricatures. The first never has lived, and the second never will. The real artist produces neither. In his pages you will find individuals, natural people, who have the contradictions and inconsistencies inseparable from humanity. The great artists "hold the mirror up to nature," and this mirror reflects with absolute accuracy. The moral and the immoral writers—that is to say, those who have some object besides that of art—use convex or concave mirrors, or those with uneven surfaces, and the result is that the images are monstrous and deformed. The little novelist and the little artist deal either in the impossible or the exceptional. The men of genius touch the universal. Their words and works throb in unison with the great ebb and flow of things. They write and work for all races and for all time.

It has been the object of thousands of reformers to destroy the passions, to do away with desires; and, could this object be accomplished, life would become a burden, with but one desire—that is to say, the desire for extinction. Art in its highest forms increases passion, gives tone and colour and zest to life. But while it increases passion it refines. It extends the horizon. The bare necessities of life constitute a prison, a dungeon. Under the influence of art the walls expand, the roof rises, and it becomes a temple.

Art is not a sermon, and the artist is

not a preacher. Art accomplishes by indirection. The beautiful refines. The perfect in art suggests the perfect in conduct. The harmony in music teaches, without intention, the lesson of proportion in life. The bird in his song has no moral purpose, and yet the influence is humanising. The beautiful in nature acts through appreciation and sympathy. It does not browbeat, neither does it humiliate. It is beautiful without regard to you. Roses would be unbearable if in their red and perfumed hearts were mottoes to the effect that bears eat bad boys, and that honesty is the best policy.

Art creates an atmosphere in which the proprieties, the amenities, and the virtues unconsciously grow. The rain does not lecture the seed. The light does not make rules for the vine and flower.

The heart is softened by the pathos of the perfect.

The world is a dictionary of the mind, and in this dictionary of things genius discovers analogies, resemblances, and parallels amid opposites, likeness in difference, and corroboration in contradiction. Language is but a multitude of pictures. Nearly every word is a work of art, a picture represented by a sound, and this sound represented by a mark, and this mark gives not only the sound, but the picture of something in the outward world, and the picture of something within the mind; and with these words, which were once pictures, other pictures are made.

The greatest pictures and the greatest statues, the most wonderful and marvellous groups, have been painted and chiselled with words. They are as fresh to-day as when they fell from human lips. Penelope still ravels, weaves, and waits; Ulysses's bow is bent, and through the level rings the eager arrow flies. Cordelia's tears are falling now. The greatest gallery of the world is found in Shakespeare's book. The pictures and the marbles of the Vatican and Louvre are faded, crumbling things, compared with his, in which perfect colour gives to

perfect form the glow and movement of passion's highest life.

Everything except the truth wears, and needs to wear, a mask. Little souls are ashamed of nature. Prudery pretends to have only those passions that it cannot feel. Moral poetry is like a respectable canal that never overflows its banks. It has weirs through which, slowly and without damage, any excess of feeling is allowed to flow. It makes excuses for nature, and regards love as an interesting convict. Moral art paints or chisels feet, faces, and rags. It regards the body as obscene. It hides with drapery that which it has not the genius purely to portray. Mediocrity becomes moral from a necessity which it has the impudence to call virtue. It pretends to regard ignorance as the foundation of purity, and insists that virtue seeks the companionship of the blind.

Art creates, combines, and reveals. It is the highest manifestation of thought, of passion, of love, of intuition. It is the highest form of expression, of history, and prophecy. It allows us to look at an unmasked soul, to fathom the abysses of passion, to understand the heights and depths of love.

Compared with what is in the mind of man, the outward world almost ceases to excite our wonder. The impression produced by mountains, seas, and stars is not so great, so thrilling, as the music of Wagner. The constellations themselves grow small when we read *Troilus and Cressida*, *Hamlet*, or *Lear*. What are seas and stars in the presence of a heroism that holds pain and death as naught? What are seas and stars compared with human hearts? What is the quarry compared with the statue?

Art civilises because it enlightens, developes, strengthens, ennobles. It deals with the beautiful, with the passionate, with the ideal. It is the child of the heart. To be great, it must deal with the human. It must be in accordance with the experience, with the hopes, with the fears, and with the possibilities of man. No one cares to paint a palace,

because there is nothing in such a picture to touch the heart. It tells of responsibility, of the prison, of the conventional. It suggests a load, it tells of apprehension, of weariness, and *ennui*. The picture of a cottage, over which runs a vine, a little home thatched with content, with its simple life, its natural sunshine and shadow, its trees bending with fruit, its hollyhocks and pinks, its happy children, its hum of bees, is a poem, a smile in the desert of this world.

The great lady, in velvet and jewels, makes but a poor picture. There is not freedom enough in her life. She is constrained. She is too far away from the simplicity of happiness. In her thought there is too much of the mathematical. In all art you will find a touch of chaos, of liberty; and there is in all artists a little of the vagabond—that is to say, genius.

The nude in art has rendered holy the beauty of woman. Every Greek statue pleads for mothers and sisters. From these marbles come strains of music. They have filled the heart of man with tenderness and worship. They have kindled reverence, admiration, and love. The Venus de Milo, that even mutilation cannot mar, tends only to the elevation of our race. It is a miracle of majesty and beauty, the supreme idea of the supreme woman. It is a melody in marble. All the lines meet in a kind of voluptuous and glad content. The pose is rest itself. The eyes are filled with thoughts of love. The breast seems dreaming of a child.

The prudent is not the poetic; it is

the mathematical. Genius is the spirit of abandon; it is joyous, irresponsible. It moves in the swell and curve of billows; it is careless of conduct and consequence. For a moment the chain of cause and effect seems broken; the soul is free. It gives an account not even to itself. Limitations are forgotten; nature seems obedient to the will; the ideal alone exists; the universe is a symphony.

Every brain is a gallery of art, and every soul is, to a greater or less degree, an artist. The pictures and statues that now enrich and adorn the walls and niches of the world, as well as those that illuminate the pages of its literature, were taken originally from the private galleries of the brain.

The soul—that is to say, the artist—compares the pictures in its own brain with the pictures that have been taken from the galleries of others and made visible. This soul, this artist, selects that which is nearest perfection in each, takes such parts as it deems perfect, puts them together, forms new pictures, new statues, and in this way creates the ideal.

To express desires, longings, ecstasies, prophecies, and passions in form and colour; to put love, hope, heroism, and triumph in marble; to paint dreams and memories with words; to portray the purity of dawn, the intensity and glory of noon, the tenderness of twilight, the splendour and mystery of night, with sounds; to give the invisible to sight and touch, and to enrich the common things of earth with gems and jewels of the mind—this is Art.

Date Due



TRENT UNIVERSITY



0 1164 0048582 1

AC8 .I54 1st ser.
Ingersoll, Robert Green
Lectures and essays

DATE	ISSUED TO
	143068

143068

